

REPORT 2005



High-Level Group on Education for All Fifth Meeting

Beijing, People's
Republic of China
28-30 November 2005

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For further information, please contact:
Director, Division of International
Coordination and Monitoring
for Education for All
Education Sector
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP
France
Telephone: +33 (0) 1 45 68 08 80
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 56 26
E-mail: dfu@unesco.org
Web site: www.unesco.org

The draft of this Report was shared with all participants
of the fifth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All

Text prepared by ► Clinton Robinson
Assisted by ► Elizabeth Fordham
Printing ► UNESCO

Contents

■ Foreword	5
■ Key issues from the High-Level Group	6
1 Introduction	8
1.1 China's commitment to education for all	8
1.2 2005: a year of opportunity	9
1.3 Investing in education: Mongolia's experience	10
1.4 Education for the empowerment of minority children	10
1.5 Literacy and the MDGs: an African perspective	11
2 Reviewing progress towards the EFA goals: can these be achieved without stronger commitment to literacy and gender equality	12
2.1 Literacy for life	12
2.2 Action for equity and inclusion	12
2.3 The way forward	13
3 Reaching the marginalized: investing in education for rural people to achieve the EFA goals and MDGs	15
3.1 The importance of education for rural people	15
3.2 Achieving quality education for rural people	15
3.3 The way forward	17
4 Strengthening partnerships through the Joint Action Plan	19
4.1 The Joint Action Plan for achieving EFA by 2015	19
4.2 Target areas for joint action	20
4.3 The way forward	20
5 Resource mobilization and aid effectiveness	22
■ Part I. Translating EFA commitments into reality	22
5.1 The role of the European Union.	22
5.2 Improving aid to education	23
■ Part II. Taking stock of FTI experience	24
5.3 FTI: progress, challenges, prospects	24
5.4 How effective is the FTI?	24
5.5 The way forward	25
■ Conclusion	27
■ Appendices	28
■ Communiqué from the Fifth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All	28
■ Opening address of the Director-General of UNESCO.	32
■ List of participants	34
■ Agenda of the Meeting	46
■ List of side-events	51
■ Abbreviations and acronyms	52

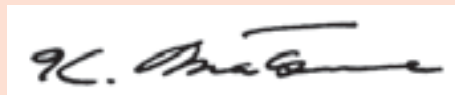
Foreword

For the international community, 2005 was a significant year. The focus on development, on increasing aid, on improving the effectiveness of joint efforts and on more coherent action across the United Nations system not only provided the context of the fifth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA) in Beijing but also nourished the hopes and expectations of the participants. As EFA partners, we were all aware of the new opportunities to be grasped, especially to ensure that EFA is firmly inscribed on wider development agendas and that new resources are made available for the achievement of the Dakar goals.

This report indicates that the members of the High-Level Group were fully aware of the high stakes, and the Beijing Communiqué demonstrates their clear determination to make faster and deeper progress in EFA. It is particularly heartening that some of the less adequately addressed issues of the EFA agenda, such as adult literacy and the education of rural people, have begun to engage the attention of EFA partners. It is only when neglected and more marginalized populations are given sufficient and appropriate learning opportunities that we will be able to claim full implementation of the Dakar goals.

The Beijing meeting was a pivotal event in EFA, coming five years after the Dakar World Education Forum in Dakar. It coincided with the elaboration of important reforms in UNESCO's Education Sector. As partners in the EFA movement, we have a clear challenge before us – to translate the commitments of 2005 into more vigorous efforts to achieve Education for All.

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General, UNESCO



KEY ISSUES FROM THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP

On commitment to literacy and gender equality

- Literacy is a right and the foundation of all further learning. It drives progress towards all the EFA goals and is central to poverty reduction and all forms of individual and social development. The fact that literacy is denied to some 771 million adults is therefore a scandal that demands urgent action.
- Strong political commitment is essential to progress in literacy, as is increased funding and the development of a holistic strategy that addresses the full range of literacy needs, from quality primary education, through adult literacy programmes, to the development of sustainable literate environments.
- Investment in the education of girls and women is one of the most effective development strategies. The failure to achieve the 2005 gender parity goal must spur governments and the international community to more effective action, in particular in abolishing school fees and establishing better infrastructure.

On education for rural people

- EFA will not be achieved without specific efforts to meet the needs of marginalized groups. Since the majority of those excluded from education live in rural areas, education for rural people (ERP) is vital and urgent.
- ERP demands a broad and flexible approach that works in partnership and across sectors, responding to the diversity of situations and needs in rural areas, and mobilizing the latent resources – languages, cultures – of local communities.
- In serving the most vulnerable, the whole education sector is strengthened to be more responsive and provide more meaningful education.

On the Joint Action Plan to achieve the EFA goals

- A more strategic and coherent approach to international coordination is needed to achieve the EFA goals.
- Efforts are also required to develop well-structured partnerships on the ground within countries.
- International coordination must focus on providing effective support to national education plans within the context of country-led development strategies.
- UNESCO needs to strengthen its role in coordinating the EFA process at the international level and to provide greater support to countries at the national and regional levels through capacity-building, policy advice, monitoring and the exchange of good practices.

On resource mobilization and aid effectiveness

- While donors have pledged to increase their commitments to official development assistance (ODA), efforts are needed to ensure that these pledges are translated into real resources and that a sufficient proportion of aid is directed towards basic education.
- As the volume of aid increases, donors and developing countries must work together more closely to improve its effectiveness. For donors this means harmonizing and aligning their support behind country priorities and procedures, and providing long-term, predictable funding. For developing countries this implies exercising greater leadership by creating prioritized education sector plans and tackling structural challenges in the areas of capacity-building, partnership and transparency.
- The Fast Track Initiative needs to be expanded both as a mechanism for enhancing aid effectiveness and a means for mobilizing additional funds and technical assistance for education in all low-income countries, including fragile states.

1 Introduction

The fifth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA) was held in Beijing, the People's Republic of China, from 28 to 30 November 2005. The meeting brought together over 360 participants, including representatives from developing countries, bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, civil society and the private sector. This was the largest gathering of the High-Level Group to date, with 45 member states and 17 international organizations represented in the Meeting.

Mr Zhou Ji, Minister of Education, People's Republic of China, presided over the opening ceremony of the Meeting. The ceremony began with an address by the Prime Minister of China, Mr Wen Jiabao, and continued with a series of speeches by the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, the President of Mongolia, Mr Nambaryn Enkhbayar, the Crown Princess of Thailand, Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, and the Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr Arthur Zahidi N'Goma. The ceremony took place at the Great Hall of the People's Congress, where guests were welcomed by a youth orchestra and a chorus of children dressed in traditional costumes representing the country's 54 ethnic minorities.

The High-Level Group discussions were organized into four main working sessions along the following themes:

- ▷ Review of progress towards the EFA goals: can these be achieved without stronger commitment to literacy and gender equality?;
- ▷ Reaching the marginalized: investing in education for rural people to achieve the EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- ▷ Strengthening partnerships through the *EFA Joint Action Plan*;
- ▷ Resource mobilization and aid effectiveness: translating EFA commitments into reality and taking stock of Fast Track Initiative (FTI) experience.

A final session was devoted to the approval of the Beijing Communiqué, which was drafted during the Meeting by a 'sherpa group' and other interested participants, and adopted unanimously by the High-Level Group (see Appendix I).

The Fifth High-Level Group Meeting was enriched

by the deliberations of a number of side events that addressed specific aspects of EFA: the Sino-African Education Ministers Forum, the Technical Meeting of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and the Third Round Table on the Elimination of Child Labour, which were held prior to the Meeting; and the annual FTI Partnership Meeting, which followed it. These side events are a measure of the importance given to the EFA movement and the growing political will within the international community to achieve the Dakar goals by 2015.

This Report follows the programme of the meeting. The remainder of this section summarizes the five statements made at the opening ceremony. The following four sections correspond to the substantive themes of the Meeting. Each presents the lead commentary, followed by the main elements of panellists' presentations and the core lines of debate. The conclusion offers a perspective on the Meeting and its key outcomes.

1.1 China's commitment to education for all Mr Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister, People's Republic of China

In his opening speech, Mr Wen Jiabao outlined China's achievements in education and affirmed the country's commitment to EFA. China is convinced that education holds the key to unlocking the immense potential of its 1.3 billion people and the Chinese government places education as a top strategic priority. Its three major objectives in the area of basic education are:

- ▷ Nine-year compulsory education, with a special focus on improving educational opportunities in rural areas, home to 80 per cent of the nation's students;
- ▷ Expanding vocational education as a means to improving career prospects and promoting rural modernization;
- ▷ Building China into a learning society, where lifelong learning structures are integrated into community life.

China is also firmly committed to promoting full adult literacy and to strengthening the ranks of teachers through improvements in their status and working conditions. In all its policies China is determined to provide equitable education opportunities. The

Education is a torch passed down from generation to generation within civilizations. It is a bridge that conducts economies and societies to a good future and a fundamental condition for all-round human development.

*Mr Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister,
People's Republic of China*

government has instituted a series of measures to create an inclusive education system, including: financial assistance to poor families, living allowances for boarding school children and, from 2006, the elimination of school fees for students in rural areas.

As a result of such commitment, China has made historic progress towards EFA. Some 94 per cent of the school-age population is now enrolled in compulsory education. The attendance rate of school-age girls has

reached 98.9 per cent and adult illiteracy has dropped to 4 per cent. Such success in education has been a major force behind China's massive economic progress. However, as Mr Wen underlined, challenges still remain to achieving education for all. In particular, unremitting efforts are required to address urban-rural disparities, and to bridge inequalities between regions.

The Prime Minister next moved on to discuss global progress in EFA. He called upon international agencies and developed countries to provide greater support to education development, especially in Africa, South Asia and least developed countries (LDCs). He also emphasized the need for development partners to respect the diversity of cultures and the variety of paths to reaching the Dakar goals. Mr Wen informed the High-Level Group of China's own growing contribution to international development, which includes:

- ▷ Expanding the number of school principals and teachers from developing countries trained in China from 500 to 1,500 annually;
- ▷ Donating US\$1 million to research and training projects conducted by UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and the International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (CIEFFA);

- ▷ Building 100 rural schools in developing countries in the next three years;
- ▷ Enlarging the enrolment of students from developing countries in Chinese universities by increasing the annual government quota of scholarships to 10,000 and raising the amount for each grant;
- ▷ Increasing financial support to countries stricken by national disasters.

In conclusion, Mr Wen pledged the People's Republic of China's support for a new framework of action to improve international collaboration and to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals. As Mr Wen enjoined the High-Level Group: 'Let us close our ranks and get into action!'

1.2 2005: a year of opportunity **Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO**

After welcoming participants and thanking China for hosting the Meeting, Mr Matsuura began by highlighting the importance of 2005 for the EFA movement. He first drew attention to the series of international events that had taken place this year and that will have a crucial impact on international efforts to reach the Dakar goals: the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, United Kingdom, in July, where Heads of State agreed to the largest increase in development assistance since the 1960s; the September World Summit in New York, where world leaders for the first time collectively reaffirmed the Dakar Framework for Action and recognized UNESCO's role as the lead agency for coordinating EFA; and the Ministerial Round Table on EFA, held during UNESCO's General Conference in October, where over 100 Ministers of Education gathered together to pledge their commitment to achieving EFA by 2015. Mr Matsuura also pointed to the importance of taking stock of EFA experience five years after Dakar. He signalled the real progress that had been made in education development: national spending on basic education has risen, as has external aid, and there have been striking improvements in some of the most difficult situations, such as the low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia. However, Mr Matsuura also recognized the need to acknowledge – with just ten years before the target date of 2015 – the huge challenges that still remain. As this year's Global Monitoring Report

clearly demonstrates, adult illiteracy stands as a major obstacle to EFA, and in many countries that have seen progress towards universal primary education (UPE) the quality of basic education remains low. Moreover, the international community also has important lessons to learn from the fact that it has missed the first Dakar objective of achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005.

Mr Matsuura underlined that the High-Level Group, and its resulting Beijing communiqué, will help give direction to international events in 2006, starting with the African Union Summit in January and the meeting of Education Ministers of the E-9 Group of high population countries in Monterrey, Mexico, in February. As Mr Matsuura firmly underscored, it is through these and other gatherings that the international community will mobilize the financial resources and political momentum needed to achieve the Dakar objectives.

1.3 Investing in education: Mongolia's experience **Nambaryn Enkhbayar, President of Mongolia**

Mr Enkhbayar focused in his address on Mongolia's longstanding tradition of respect for education. He noted that his government was committed to providing free and compulsory primary and secondary education, and legally bound to invest 20 per cent of its budget in the education sector. As a result of such political and financial

Instead of adorning yourself with material wealth and decorations adorn yourself with knowledge and education.

Mongolian proverb

commitment Mongolia has succeeded in all but eradicating illiteracy: 98 per cent of the population over the age of 15 are literate as are 97.5 per cent of women. Investment in education has also facilitated Mongolia's peaceful transition to democracy and its progress in achieving market-oriented reforms.

Mr Enkhbayar recognized that difficulties still remained in providing EFA in Mongolia. Maintaining the quality of education is one significant challenge,

as is retaining pupils in school, especially in rural areas. With the privatization of livestock rearing in the 1990s, herders began to withdraw their children from education, with the result that the drop-out rate rose over the past decade to around 8 to 9 per cent of school-age children. This rate is now falling, but it still remains a problem. The government has developed a series of measures particularly targeted to meet the needs of rural people. These include:

- 400 dormitories for the children of herders;
- Free schoolbooks for the children of vulnerable families;
- The increased use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to empower rural people.

Mr Enkhbayar concluded his address by referring to Mongolia's current work in building an integrated national development strategy, incorporating both the EFA objectives and the MDGs, and placing basic education at its core.

1.4 Education for the empowerment of minority children **Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Crown Princess of Thailand**

Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn began by thanking UNESCO for appointing her to the position of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the 'Empowerment of Minority Children through Education and through the Preservation of their Intangible Cultural Heritage'. Her Royal Highness expressed her profound commitment to ensuring that children from ethnic and minority groups receive equal rights to education, and to working to overcome the many obstacles that lie in the way of equal opportunities for all, from poor health and destitution to the problems of language and citizenship. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn also drew attention in her address to the great importance of preserving the cultural heritage of minority groups, both in terms of language, literature, costume and craft, as well as in terms that are less tangible and more difficult to protect, such as moral values. Her Royal Highness pledged to exercise all her efforts to be a good educator, especially among the disadvantaged and the marginalized.

1.5 Literacy and the MDGs:**an African perspective****Arthur Zahidi N’Goma, Vice-President,
Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Mr N’Goma welcomed the important advances that have been made towards the achievement of Education for All since the Dakar World Education Forum, 2000. However, he noted with concern the many obstacles that still existed to reaching the Dakar goals, especially in Africa, where most of the countries off track to achieving EFA by 2015 are to be found. Mr N’Goma observed that the situation in many African nations was far from encouraging. Over a decade of conflict, war, economic decline and the pillaging of natural resources has led to the widespread destruction of the basic social and economic infrastructure, including national education systems. Mr N’Goma argued that it was impossible to overestimate the urgency of the need to rebuild Africa’s education capacity. He described the goal of education for all as ‘the great hope for humanity’, underlining that education was the key to peace and poverty reduction and to the creation of a culture of freedom and democracy. Mr N’Goma concluded by urging the international community to show its solidarity with Africa’s fight against ignorance and illiteracy. He spoke in particular of the importance of addressing the question of African debt, one of the major impediments to the achievement of EFA in the continent.

2 Reviewing progress towards the EFA goals: Can these be achieved without stronger commitment to literacy and gender equality?

As an introduction to the first working session of the meeting Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, called for genuine exchange and open discussion. He then highlighted the three EFA initiatives that UNESCO has launched: the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) which will address adult literacy needs in 34 countries through partnerships and capacity-building; the Teacher Training Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) focusing on increasing the supply of teachers and raising the quality of teaching and learning; and the Global Initiative on HIV & AIDS and Education (EDUCAIDS), under the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) umbrella, to ensure that education is fully maximized in the fight against the pandemic. These three initiatives will structure UNESCO's programmes in response to clearly identified areas of challenge in EFA.

2.1 Literacy for life

Mr Nicholas Burnett, Director, Global Monitoring Report Team

'*Literacy drives progress towards all the Education for All goals*' – this was how Mr Nicholas Burnett introduced the theme of the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report. As Director of the GMR Team, he presented the Report's findings on literacy and on progress towards the other EFA goals. In pursuing EFA, literacy is:

Benefits of literacy

EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006

Self-esteem and empowerment:
widening choices, access to other rights

Political: *increased participation*

Cultural: *engaging with own culture, questioning norms*

Economic: *returns on investment comparable to primary education*

- ▷ A right and the foundation of all further learning;
- ▷ Central to poverty reduction and brings individual and social benefits;
- ▷ Neglected on policy agendas, both by governments and funding agencies;
- ▷ Still denied to some 771 million adults – 18 per cent of the adult population – and that estimate is conservative given the lack of direct testing of literacy competence.

These findings are underpinned in the Report by analysis of the global literacy challenge, by studies of how societies have achieved widespread literacy, and through a review of international commitments to support literacy. In addition to cataloguing both the benefits of literacy (see box) and the inadequacies with which it is frequently delivered, Mr Burnett laid special emphasis on the notion of the literate environment. This term encompasses the various factors that sustain literacy competence and use, such as: the production and availability of print and electronic media, policies on publishing and information, and investment in textbooks and libraries.

The Report proposes a three-pronged approach to tackling the literacy challenge:

- ▷ Universal quality education which will – over time – prevent young people from becoming non-literate adults;
- ▷ Massive scaling up of youth and adult literacy programmes;
- ▷ Development of rich literate environments.

Using research commissioned by the Report team, Mr Burnett suggested that over the next decade an annual expenditure of the order of US\$2.5 billion would be necessary to make serious progress towards the Dakar literacy goal, with the implications that current allocations of around 1 per cent of education budgets would have to rise, and that a higher proportion of aid to education must be directed to literacy. Mr Burnett also drew attention to the fact that 95 countries missed the 2005 gender parity goal. On current estimates – and even more disturbingly – 86 countries are unlikely to meet the goal even by 2015.

2.2 Action for equity and inclusion

Four panellists brought their experience to bear on the topics of literacy and gender in EFA. The neglect of literacy and the scandal of illiteracy in today's world were emphasized by all speakers. Cuba's commitment to literacy has been manifest not only inside the country, but also beyond its borders as the 'Yo si puedo' ('I can do it') method has been taken up in the Latin American region and Africa. China's efforts in literacy have been equally dynamic: over the past 15 years 94 million adults have acquired literacy, a huge

contribution to reducing global illiteracy. Key to this progress has been political commitment, expressed in legal arrangements and accountability for progress

Panellists:

Cuba: Mr Luis Gómez Gutiérrez, Minister of Education

Kenya: Mr George Godia, Education Secretary

People's Republic of China: Mr Zhang Xinheng, Vice-Minister of Education

Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education: Ms Maria Lourdes Almazan-Khan

at the central, local and county level. A focus on rural areas where literacy needs are highest has led to special measures, such as subsidies for the poorest families. Remaining groups are the hardest to reach, requiring special strategies – they often live in mountainous areas, outside the mainstream economy and belong to ethnic minorities.

From the perspective of civil society, a key player in literacy development, there is need for both political will and sound practice: relevant

curricula and languages, appropriate pedagogy and local design. With regard to funding literacy, the welcome efforts of the Global Monitoring Report to cost literacy provision must be complemented by practical guidance to governments on establishing realistic budgets, including the need for an infrastructure of professional support: research, scholarship, training, publishing and so on. Donors should send clear messages that adult literacy will be funded as part of education sector plans.

Turning to gender, experience in Kenya has shown that the gender gap in education cannot be addressed solely at an educational level; creating opportunities for women across society as a whole is the larger framework. Moreover, there are large regional disparities with differences in cultural patterns and issues of distance from school and security. Kenya's gender and education policy has, over the past 10 years, targeted marginalized areas, addressed school infrastructure and offered bursaries to keep girls from poor families in school.

2.3 The way forward

Following the panellists' presentations an extensive debate ranged widely over literacy, gender,

international aid and EFA implementation in specific contexts.

Literacy: While affirming literacy as a key element of the right to education, participants stressed its links with other aspects of learning and of development. Increasing adult literacy can be self-financing as it leads to greater efficiency; for example, a more literate home environment increases the chances of a child being sent to school and then of being successful in school. Literacy also leads to lifelong learning and new skills.

There were clear calls for greater funding for literacy, recognizing the need to devote more than the average 1 per cent of education budgets to literacy efforts. The example of Brazil was cited where 4 per cent of the federal budget is devoted to adult learning programmes. Developing a richer literate environment – also referred to as 'post-literacy' – is essential to sustainable literacy competence, with sound policies and practices in the use of local languages. Among the global obstacles to literacy is the socio-economic vulnerability of both parents and children, often resulting in child labour; literacy can address this problem by increasing the level of employability of parents. Focusing on women's literacy can lead to what some termed the 'literacy-gender social multiplier effect': when women are literate, the impact on families and children is appreciable.

Gender: The undoubted gains in gender parity brought by schooling are threatened in places by HIV/AIDS, drought, food inequality, social violence and deepening poverty. This underscores the need for schools to be places of care and protection, and for a constant emphasis on quality learning. Missing the 2005 gender parity goal must spur governments and the international community to more effective action: abolishing school fees and establishing better infrastructure. Investment in the education of girls and women remains one of the most effective development strategies, with a strong impact on the health, well-being and opportunities of current and future generations.

International aid: 2008 will be a crucial year for EFA – by then all children need to be enrolled in school if the 2015 goal is to be met. By 2008, therefore, aid to basic education should be doubled, according to some donor countries. The need for serious increases in funding was echoed by some developing countries where lack of resources, not lack of political will, is the main

obstacle. Several participants called for the abolition of school fees, in a context of greater and more predictable aid; support for the maintenance of quality must accompany the removal of fees, if learning is not to be impaired even as access is enhanced.

EFA implementation: Participants noted the need for greater understanding of disparities within countries in order to implement EFA in an equitable manner and reach those who remain without adequate learning opportunities. In order to respond to diversity, such information needs to be part of the ongoing monitoring of EFA, identifying local factors that hinder progress.

Schools are not just classrooms! The need for planning adequate schools with a library, laboratory and other facilities is part of ensuring quality education. Improving the status of educators of all kinds and providing in-service training for teachers also contribute concretely to better learning opportunities for both children and adults.

As a summary of the outcomes of the session, Mr Peter Smith, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, presented six recommendations:

1. Extend monitoring to obtain and present more data at the national and regional levels, building on the work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS);
2. Focus on what it means to be successful in school and other learning programmes – ensure that all can access suitable learning programmes and succeed in them;
3. Direct more of expanding aid to education;
4. Make available on the web the best strategies for teacher training, allowing others to learn from them;
5. Sift out good strategies and the good results they achieve, and share what is working;
6. Embrace information technology for its transformational potential in schooling.

In the five years since Dakar school enrolment has risen; it is now crucial to keep children in school and enable them to be successful – this is the way to sustainable literacy, economic opportunity and social responsibility.

3 Reaching the marginalized: investing in education for rural people to achieve the EFA goals and the MDGs

In achieving the goals of EFA the education of rural people is the 'weakest, but most crucial point'. With these words Mr Zhang Xinsheng, Deputy Minister of Education of the People's Republic of China, set a clear and challenging tone for the topic. Chairing the session, he went on to assert that education is a 'comprehensive agent of change' and that China, with its vast rural areas, is adopting methods adapted to this challenge, such as improving governance, using information technology and customizing the curriculum to the needs of learners. The debate, he hoped, would provide innovative strategies for providing education for rural people.

3.1 The importance of education for rural people

Mr Mamadou Ndoye, Executive Secretary for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

As lead commentator, Mr Mamadou Ndoye, Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), laid out the facts of the case:

- ▷ 50.8 per cent of the world's population are rural;
- ▷ 71 per cent of Africa's population are rural;
- ▷ 70 per cent of the world's poor are rural, with no change expected before 2015;
- ▷ 68 children are in school in rural areas, for every 100 in urban zones;
- ▷ 46 rural children, for every 100 urban children, achieve primary-level completion.

Unless these glaring disparities are fully and squarely addressed, the world has little hope of achieving the EFA goals. Thus the challenge to education is to do more, differently and better:

Do more: Proportionately greater investment will be the only way to reach the poorest and most isolated, and to reduce inequalities. Compensatory strategies must take into account high unit costs and ensure that real learning is taking place.

Do differently: The rural world is diverse and many marginalized groups are rural: nomads, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, farmers and fisherfolk. Diversity requires carefully targeted strategies and collaboration between education and other sectors. Partnerships, particularly between government

and civil society, must work at the local level, with devolved management; a centralized approach will not address the diversity of rural circumstances.

Do better: Rural education must not equate with sub-standard education; quality is about healthy children, qualified teachers, efficient pedagogy and conducive environments. Rural schools are frequently without libraries. How are children (and adults) to participate in the wider literate environment? Relevance is often an issue: learning in rural areas must grow out of the local culture, using local languages, with strong links between school and community, and the flexibility to adapt the curriculum to enhance relevant learning.

Rural education needs attention, but not at the expense of other marginalized groups; in fact, improving rural education will benefit the education system as a whole. Inter-sectoral collaboration is a sine qua non – linking learning with health, governance, and economic development. Links with the MDGs are clearly essential. Summing up, Mr Ndoye drew out four lessons for rural education.

1. A more holistic and interactive approach to achieving EFA is necessary.
2. Constraints must become opportunities, as, for example, in Latin America where multigrade teaching has offered new ways of envisaging learning/schooling.
3. There are latent resources that must be mobilized – such as local languages and cultures.
4. Innovation: ensuring relevant and high-quality rural learning will oblige us to find new ways of thinking about education.

3.2 Achieving quality education for rural people

Echoing and amplifying the main thrust of this presentation, four panellists (see box) brought the perspectives of a multilateral agency (FAO), Asia (Thailand), Latin America (Mexico) and teachers (Education International). There was full agreement that the educational needs of rural people need special attention, that opportunities currently are neither sufficient nor fully appropriate for achieving quality learning outcomes, and that the design of approaches to learning and schooling must address and respect the diversity of rural areas.

Panellists:

FAO: Mr Changchui He, Assistant Director-General for Asia and the Pacific

Thailand: Ms Kasama Varavarn, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

Mexico: Mr Reyes Tamez Guerra, Minister of Education

Education International: Ms Mary Futrell, Founding President

Governments play a key role in addressing the particularities of rural areas, making sure that specific plans are integrated into broader government planning, both in EFA and in other sectors. Moreover, collaboration among ministries will greatly enhance effectiveness, for instance between education and agriculture, fisheries, forestry, rural development and finance. Stronger and more focused investment will

result, but only with clear government will, as rural people often lack political voice in comparison with inhabitants of urban areas. Support from the international community has been strengthened through the EFA Education for Rural People Flagship, launched jointly by FAO and UNESCO, as a support both to governments and to the empowerment of rural people in becoming pro-active agents in their own development. At an international level, three stages are proposed: first, to examine public policies towards education and skills development for rural people; second, to start a policy dialogue among relevant ministries and stakeholders; and third, to build capacity at country and regional level to design and implement rural initiatives.

Thailand's experience has shown that strategies must address the specific circumstances of rural people – it does not work to assume that the same approaches can be applied as those that have hitherto met the needs of non-rural or less differentiated populations. In literacy programmes, teacher preparation, school infrastructure and equipment, choice of the languages of learning and the role of the community – in all these aspects of education focused and innovative strategies alone will lead to quality learning outcomes. In addition, legal frameworks and local government accountability to provide relevant education must be strengthened. Linking the education of adults, through literacy classes, to that of children has, in Thailand, proved to be a means

of strengthening the learning environment and the social value of education. Rural education must not be second class: in Thailand, for instance, this danger has been avoided by providing subsidies to the rural poor, and by ensuring that rural schools are equipped with information technology and connected to the wider world through the internet. Does an emphasis on rural education drain the system of resources? Quite the contrary. In Thailand the conclusion is clear: *in serving the most vulnerable, the whole education system is strengthened to be more responsive and provide more meaningful education.*

The Mexican experience in large measure bears out this conclusion. Where steps have been taken to strengthen education in disadvantaged communities, including rural communities, the quality of the whole system has risen. Mexico has taken a number of initiatives to improve opportunities for specific population groups.

- ▷ The poorest families: subsidies with components for health, education and social development to help the poorest families rise out of poverty, and to ensure that they do not take their children out of school for economic reasons;
- ▷ The most impoverished regions: a scheme of 'community plazas' encouraging literacy and other learning opportunities that can be directly applied in daily life;
- ▷ Poorly performing schools: a US\$10,000 grant directly to the school, used for priorities determined by parent-teacher associations in conjunction with the school administration;
- ▷ Indigenous communities: the Mexican president has instructed that new educational initiatives should be implemented first in indigenous communities. This will be applied, for example, to the ongoing equipment of Grade 5 and 6 classrooms with interactive digital blackboards, giving access to wider information and resources (Enciclomedia). These communities also have learning materials in thirty-three indigenous languages, and education is provided in the most widely spoken of them.

These experiences demonstrate the need to specifically identify and target disadvantaged groups, which, once again, are predominantly rural. The process of doing so is a significant means of achieving the EFA goals overall.

Ensuring that high-calibre teachers are available in rural schools and keeping them there are two issues of crucial importance. It is, again, the diversity and particular contexts of rural areas that determine what kind of training teachers need. Thus rural teachers must understand the culture of the community where they work, and be sensitive to diversity and gender issues, as well as understand the language spoken locally. For maximum relevance, teachers should be able to use a variety of teaching and learning strategies, and relate material to the local context, for instance by using real life situations in mathematics and science, thus forging links with farming, fishing or other rural livelihoods.

There is, however, a real difficulty in deploying high-calibre teachers to rural areas. Research shows that voluntary, para-professional or semi-trained teachers often staff rural schools, and that teachers may have little incentive to work in remote, rural areas. Inducements of special payment or housing benefits may be necessary to retain teachers. The relationships of the school with the local community and of teachers with parents are also critical in cultivating a supportive environment for schools. Rural teachers often feel isolated, so innovative and workable solutions must be found, such as assigning two teachers together, particularly female teachers, or a married couple who are both teachers. The upshot of such measures is a higher cost – but in the long run no country can afford not to hire and deploy good teachers in rural areas.

3.3 The way forward

These presentations stimulated a rich debate replete with examples of special measures designed to improve access to and quality of schooling and other learning opportunities in rural areas. Other participants pointed out particular aspects of disadvantage that flow from the marginalization and isolation of rural areas:

- ▷ Lack of infrastructure, sometimes because of destruction caused by conflict or neglect from poor governance;
- ▷ Distance from school and lack of transportation;
- ▷ Lack of marketable qualifications, leading to the low value of education in the eyes of parents and thus unschooled children;
- ▷ Poor learning environments and lack of alignment of primary education with secondary-level opportunities leaving children without the possibility of continuing their education;
- ▷ Poor facilities for girls, leading to drop-out;
- ▷ Illiteracy and lack of education in villages which can lead to exploitation, such as child trafficking and slavery, problems of land tenure and use, or the perpetuation of child labour;
- ▷ Insufficient teachers in general or in particular subjects such as mathematics and science.

This catalogue of problems and the examples of effective approaches led Mr Ndoye to sum up the discussion in the following ten points.

1. We must understand the complexity of education in rural areas, fully appreciating the factors of exclusion.
2. Policies must emphasize equity and empowerment, enshrined in legal frameworks and backed by political will;
3. Resources must be adequate and targeted, with incentives or subsidies to redress the urban-rural imbalance.
4. Special measures may be needed to ensure that teachers stay in rural areas.
5. Strategies must be multi-dimensional – multigrade classes, use of technologies, etc.
6. Multilingual approaches will integrate local languages with languages of wider communication in learning.
7. Partnerships, such as *faire faire* (see box), must bring stakeholders together in cooperative efforts.
8. Community participation, local management and strategies adapted to the local context will give rural education the best chance of sustained effectiveness.
9. The barrier of school fees and other charges, where these still exist, must be addressed;
10. Exchange of experience, as in this forum, will provide ideas and stimulus for new solutions and innovative practice.

The challenge of rural education: some effective approaches

Burkina Faso: the government adopted the facilitating approach – *faire faire* – first developed in Senegal, by which stakeholders each do what they do best. With government responsible for the quality, monitoring and evaluation of literacy programmes, local development associations implement them. The financing passes through an autonomous central fund managed by local and international stakeholders, including funders, non-governmental organizations and government representatives.

Cuba: After achieving universal enrolment in schooling, Cuba is working to raise the quality of learning, in all environments. One aspect of this is the installation of computers and televisions in all schools, including the pre-school level. Some 2,300 rural schools have been equipped with solar power in order to be able to use this technology. In addition, rural areas often have a pupil-teacher ratio that is better than the national average of twenty to one.

Egypt: Starting in 1992, Egypt set up community schools – there are now 4,500. Established in disadvantaged communities, they give a chance to those that would otherwise be prevented, by poverty or tradition, from attending school. The community is engaged through participation in the school boards. These schools favour girls, with mothers also having an opportunity to gain skills; the teachers and tutors are rural women – which provides work in the village. This approach addresses issues of social justice and offers the disadvantaged a quality education.

Kenya: Appropriate legal frameworks, decentralized planning, focused capacity building, and multisectoral partnerships which include civil society – these are some of the measures that Kenya has adopted to address the EFA challenge in a country where 85 per cent of the population is rural. In addition to the abolition of primary school fees, special steps in rural areas include school construction in marginalized communities with attention to facilities for girls, low-cost boarding schools, and school feeding programmes in arid regions.

Morocco: The problem of low enrolment in schools is not just about poverty – the system may contribute to the situation through schools that are not attractive or programmes that are not adequate. To address the under-schooled and non-schooled population, Morocco set up a Ministry for Literacy and Non-Formal Education, which took measures including:

- ▷ Enabling children to re-enter school;
- ▷ Stipends to mothers;
- ▷ Training for nomads to give classes while continuing in the caravan;
- ▷ Expanding the scope of Koranic schools;
- ▷ Improving the training of educators.

United Republic of Tanzania: In the context of high levels of poverty and a very rural environment, Tanzania expects nevertheless to achieve UPE by 2008, and has already achieved gender parity for the first 11 years of schooling. This is a result of government commitment to education, manifested in: the abolition of school fees in 2002, a clear legislative framework, setting up a school in every village, and non-formal primary education for children and youth who missed formal schooling with an emphasis on literacy.

4 Strengthening partnerships through the Joint Action Plan

Mr Ahmed Gamal Eddin Musa, Minister of Education, Egypt underlined in his opening remarks the importance of partnerships for meeting the Dakar goals. Mr Musa emphasized the need not only for enhanced coordination among multilateral agencies at the international level, but also for strategies to improve cooperation among EFA stakeholders at the national level. He asked High-Level Group participants to reflect on the most effective mechanisms for strengthening such partnerships, and to focus in particular on the development and implementation of the Joint Action Plan for achieving EFA by 2015.

4.1 The Joint Action Plan for achieving EFA by 2015 Mr Peter Smith, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

Mr Peter Smith, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, introduced the Joint Action Plan, defining its two-fold aim of providing:

A global map of the first purposes and principal contributions of the five major United Nations agencies engaged in EFA;

A coherent strategy of how these agencies can work together more efficiently to achieve the Dakar goals.

Mr Smith explained that UNESCO, as the lead coordinating agency for EFA, had been requested to develop the Joint Action Plan by its Executive Board in March 2004. He emphasized that the current document was based on a series of on-going consultations and was very much work-in-progress. However, he expressed the hope that with the advice and endorsement of the High-Level Group, UNESCO could move ahead with the Plan, and look forward to a Heads of Agency meeting in mid-2006 where a strategy for Joint Action may be agreed and adopted.

Mr Smith underlined that the first principle of any plan for joint action must be country leadership. He insisted that the purpose of improving coordination among international agencies was to provide more effective support to national education plans within the context of country-led development strategies. The aim was to create a dynamic partnership within which each agency could play to its best advantage within a framework of clearly defined national priorities. Mr Smith noted that for UNESCO such

support to country needs would lie essentially in capacity-building, standard-setting, upstream policy advice, thought leadership, the communication of information and good practice, and international coordination.

The overriding objective of the Joint Action Plan is to enable countries to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. Mr Smith argued that in order to succeed in this endeavour it was necessary to focus on a series of strategic objectives around which policy, planning and funding processes could coalesce:

- ▷ **8-10 year time frame.** Education is a long-term investment that requires sustained and predictable support;
- ▷ **Access and success.** Progress in EFA demands measures to ensure universal access to basic education. It also requires efforts to guarantee that schooling is a success: that learners complete education with the skills and abilities needed to succeed in the world;
- ▷ **Teacher training.** Relentless efforts must be made to recruit and train more and better quality teachers;
- ▷ **Literacy.** Literacy is central to the achievement of all the EFA goals and a priority area for action;
- ▷ **Technology.** Technology carries a huge but still largely untapped potential for expanding educational opportunities and improving quality;
- ▷ **Monitoring and evaluation.** In order to ensure that policies respond to country needs support should be given to developing national monitoring, evaluation and research capabilities;
- ▷ **Commitment to UNAIDS.** Urgent action is needed to implement education programmes to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic that in many countries is undermining progress towards EFA.

Mr Smith stressed that the task of achieving EFA was serious and extremely complex. He described the commitment made in Jomtien and reaffirmed in Dakar to achieve education for all as the most important revolution in education in modern history, and argued that this commitment would only be met through the concerted and coordinated action of all EFA stakeholders.

4.2 Target areas for joint action

All panellists in this session agreed on the importance of joint action for achieving EFA, focusing in their statements on specific target areas for future coordination.

▷ Partnership at the country level.

As the Minister of Education from South Africa argued in her presentation, while initiatives to improve coordination at the international level must be strongly encouraged, efforts are also required to develop well-structured partnerships on the ground within countries. The Dakar goals cannot be reached by governments alone, and there is a pressing need for the greater involvement of civil society, the private sector and other EFA partners in the planning, implementation and monitoring of education policies. Representatives from Guyana and Japan agreed, drawing on examples from their own experience to illustrate how broad-based community engagement with, and ownership of, education development was crucial to progress in EFA. They urged UNESCO to encourage governments to create flexible and transparent mechanisms that promote dialogue and mutual accountability among partners. Ministers also noted that countries with effective structures for coordination were in a stronger position to harmonize the work of multilateral agencies and bilateral donors around their own priorities.

- ▷ **Regional cooperation.** Panellists underlined the need for greater support to regional cooperation as a key means of accelerating progress towards EFA. The representative from Norway drew the High-Level Group's attention towards the catalytic role that regional cooperation can play in a country's efforts to achieve the EFA goals, notably through peer review mechanisms and the exchange of good practice. Reference in particular was made to the

Panellists:

South Africa: Ms Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education

Guyana: Mr Henry Jeffrey, Minister of Education

Japan: Mr Mitoji Yabunaka, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Norway: Ms Anne Margareth F. Stenhammer, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

African Peer Review Mechanism and its potential to foster greater accountability in the field of education policy.

- ▷ **Monitoring.** Ministers recognized the invaluable role played by the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* in charting general trends in the world's progress towards the EFA goals. However, developing country governments also require monitoring to be extended to address national needs and disparities in greater detail. Moreover – and this suggestion was made on other occasions during the High-Level Group Meeting – in order to fully utilize the potential of the *Report* the timetable of EFA meetings needs to be reformed, with the *Report* feeding first into the Working Group and therefore shaping more strongly the agenda of the High-Level Group Meeting. As the Norwegian representative underlined, this would facilitate a more results-based approach to EFA, ensuring better policies and a more effective use of aid.
- ▷ **Areas of urgent need.** There was also agreement among ministers on the need to give priority to countries furthest away from achieving the EFA goals, as well as to the most vulnerable groups within countries. The Minister of Guyana referred in particular to the need to help these countries – many of which are post-conflict or fragile states – to qualify for FTI support. This will require special attention to be paid to the question of aid effectiveness, and to the harmonization of technical assistance and capacity- building at the country level.

4.3 The way forward

The High-Level Group strongly affirmed UNESCO's role as the lead coordinating agency for EFA and endorsed the process of developing a Joint Action Plan for Achieving EFA. However, UNESCO was called upon to proceed in much closer consultation with other EFA stakeholders including not only United Nations agencies but also bilateral donors and developing countries. Participants argued that it was only through intensive dialogue that a truly 'joint' action plan could be developed.

In developing the Joint Action Plan, the High-Level Group urged UNESCO to strengthen the principle of country leadership. International coordination must be aligned with national development strategies and

priorities, and also work within existing frameworks for cooperation at the country level, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Participants outlined several ways in which the Joint Action Plan could respond more effectively to the needs of developing countries:

- ▷ Translate the principles of the Joint Action Plan into a results-based implementation strategy with clearly targeted indicators for measuring progress towards EFA.
- ▷ Recognize the diversity of country needs. The Joint Action Plan needs to capture the full spectrum of EFA needs, both across countries and within them.
- ▷ Promote the principle of one plan per country, and encourage all agencies and donors to align their actions with it.
- ▷ Establish a dialogue between financial institutions at the international level to push for greater aid effectiveness and to encourage donors to provide the long-term, predictable investment that education needs.
- ▷ Vigorous and unrelenting efforts to raise the profile of EFA. A stronger communications strategy was judged essential both to mobilize greater political will and financial resources in support of education development, and to promote broader ownership of the country-led, rights-based vision of education represented by the Dakar goals.

The High-Level Group also addressed how UNESCO could strengthen its own strategic support to countries:

- ▷ Encourage and support South-South cooperation, peer review and the exchange of good practices at the regional level. Participants referred to the E-9 initiative as a central platform in this regard, and spoke of the need to develop triangular modalities for cooperation that would enable E-9 countries to provide support to LDCs.
 - ▷ Improve monitoring and analytical capacity at the national level. The High-Level Group argued that results-based monitoring was essential both to the mobilization of resources and stakeholders, as well as to policy-making and the effective use of aid. Participants also addressed the need for more local data, which would help countries to better identify obstacles to EFA and priority areas for action.
- ▷ Provide support to countries in the development of education sector plans. Participants requested UNESCO to help countries develop coherent and economically feasible plans that were linked to broader national development strategies.
 - ▷ Promote partnership at the national level. The High-Level Group affirmed that partnership was a central principle of EFA and called on UNESCO to help governments establish a transparent policy environment that would allow for the participation of all EFA partners in the planning, delivery and monitoring of education development. Progress towards education for all demands dialogue and coordination at all levels of society. UNESCO has a crucial role to play in promoting and facilitating the development of partnerships, not just between multilateral agencies at the international level, but also among stakeholders at the country level – non-governmental organizations, the private sector, churches, parents, teachers and children – upon whose cooperation and commitment success in EFA depends.

5 Resource Mobilization and Aid Effectiveness

Time constraints led the High-Level Group to diverge from the agenda in this fourth session of the Meeting, and the two sessions on resource mobilization and aid effectiveness were run together with one general debate at the end. Mr Pierre-Andre Wiltzer, *envoyé spécial du Gouvernement français*, chaired the resultant joint session on 'Translating EFA commitments into reality' and 'Taking Stock of FTI experience'. In his opening speech, Mr Wiltzer made two observations: first, that financing lay at the centre of the High-Level Group's preoccupations. No matter how sophisticated the proposal for achieving EFA, it cannot succeed without adequate finance; and second, although the international community has given great importance to the six EFA goals, it has been slow in providing the financial resources needed to fund them. For instance, in order to meet the goals of UPE and gender equality sub-Saharan Africa requires US\$3 billion a year until 2015 – that is 10 times more than the region is currently receiving. In light of these observations, Mr Wiltzer went on to make three suggestions on how the international community should move forward to honour its commitment to achieving EFA.

- ▷ Increase the volume of international aid to basic education. Mr Wiltzer recognized the many different, and innovative, mechanisms for resource mobilization – including grants, debt cancellation, debt swaps, the International Finance Facility and a tax on air travel – but argued that ODA remains the most important form of development assistance.
- ▷ Improve aid effectiveness. Harmonization and alignment are essential for aid effectiveness, as are predictability and durability. Mr Wiltzer noted that UNESCO has an important role to play here in maintaining donor commitment and progress towards the targets set in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005).
- ▷ Strengthen national commitment. Progress in EFA depends above all on the willingness of developing countries to make commitments to education through effective policies, financial investment, and results-based monitoring and evaluation.

In his conclusion, Mr Wiltzer drew attention to the FTI as an exemplary mechanism for resource mobilization, serving both to increase the volume of aid to education and, in line with the Declarations of Monterrey and Paris, to build a compact between donor and partner countries for improving aid effectiveness.

Part I. Translating EFA commitments into reality

5.1 The role of the European Union Mr Stefano Manservigi, Director-General for Development, European Commission

In his lead commentary for the first part of this session, Mr Manservigi addressed the European Union's response to the challenge of achieving EFA. Mr Manservigi argued that while the obstacles to meeting the Dakar goals remained serious, recent work by the EU showed that with will and determination, and with the right policies and the right funding, rapid progress was possible.

The EU is firmly committed to achieving the EFA goals and the MDGs, as its Member States recently affirmed at the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit. In 2005 the EU pledged to increase the volume of ODA by US\$46 billion by 2015, providing 80 per cent of the predicted increase in annual ODA by 2010. At least half of additional aid will go to Africa as part of the EU's new Strategy for Africa.

As well as substantially increasing its volume of aid, the EU is also committed to improving aid effectiveness. The EU was a major driving force behind the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and will actively push member states to meet its targets. The EU considers aid effectiveness to depend largely on the effectiveness of aid instruments, and in particular on the extent to which they support country ownership. The EU has long recognized budget support to be the most effective aid modality, and is determined to double the percentage of ODA provided by this means over the next few years. It has also resolved to reduce the volatility of budget support, an objective that lies at the core of the EU's New Development Policy Statement. This Statement is a landmark document, which lays out a set of politically binding objectives for achieving a common development agenda based on country ownership.

Mr Manservigi concluded that while severe challenges remain in achieving the EFA goals and the MDGs, there are several grounds for optimism: national governments are taking leadership and allocating greater domestic resources to education; donors themselves are committed to increasing aid and using it more effectively; and finally, in the FTI, a strong instrument has been created to harmonize donor actions and align them with national education strategies.

5.2 Improving aid to education

The first three panellists in this session drew on their experience to provide a series of practical suggestions of how to improve both the quality and the quantity of aid to education. The Minister of Education for Nigeria underlined in her presentation the importance of national commitment to EFA. She informed the High-Level Group of several of the

measures taken by the Nigerian government to ensure strong national leadership. These have included the following.

Panellists:

Nigeria: Ms Chinwa Nora Obaji, Minister of Education

Bangladesh: Mr Osman Farruk, Minister of Education

World Economic Forum, Global Institute for Partnership and Governance: Mr Richard Samans, Managing Director

- ▷ The creation of a 'Donor Coordination Unit' within the Ministry of Education to facilitate donor harmonization.
- ▷ The investment of 2 per cent of GDP in basic education.
- ▷ Measures to ensure that the social sector is the largest beneficiary of Nigeria's debt relief.

- ▷ Institutional reform to strengthen inter-ministerial cooperation and to enhance the involvement of civil society, the private sector and other EFA stakeholders in education delivery and policy-making.

However, as the representative from Nigeria clearly pointed out, while national governments must take the lead in EFA, effective donor support remains crucial, especially in countries where there is a high level of aid dependency. In this respect, donors should be urged to move from isolated projects to sector-wide support, to provide long-term and predictable aid, and to focus on providing aid to those regions furthest from reaching the Dakar goals.

The Minister of Education of Bangladesh also addressed the importance of effective aid. He drew attention to the limits of low-income, often highly indebted, developing countries to finance education sector development, arguing that it was

usually those countries that faced the greatest challenges in achieving EFA that were in most need of external support. Many low-income countries are already spending up to 3 per cent of their GDP on education, but often this barely covers the cost of teacher salaries. Such countries will require substantial external aid to meet the Dakar goals. However, as the Minister of Bangladesh pointed out, donor investment in EFA remains relatively weak. At present only a small percentage of ODA is allocated to basic education, and only a third of that to countries most in need. The FTI still only covers 18 countries. Despite recent aid pledges, the amount that developed countries spend on development assistance remains tiny compared to that spent on defence or on agricultural subsidies. Therefore, in working to enhance commitments on both sides of the partnership it is necessary to be realistic, realistic both about the ability of developing countries to pay for EFA, and of the willingness of bilateral and multilateral donors to support them.

The Managing Director of the Global Institute for Partnership and Governance, World Economic Forum, encouraged the High-Level Group to look to the role that public-private partnerships could play in increasing the financial and technical resources available for EFA. The private sector can make a significant contribution towards overcoming the finance gap. Corporate philanthropy currently accounts for about US\$3 to 5 billion a year in investment in developing countries; if the international community was to fully take advantage of public-private partnerships, then this sum could easily be doubled. Moreover, a great many major industries have competencies directly related to school needs, from construction and food companies to information technology firms and management consultancies. The World Economic Forum already acts as a platform for communicating this 'value chain of education', and identifying industries with which educationists could work. However, more comprehensive research still needs to be carried on how the public sector can reach out to companies both locally and globally in order to leverage in-kind capabilities and assets capable of improving educational attainment and enrolment levels.

Part II. Taking stock of FTI Experience

5.3 FTI: progress, challenges, prospects Jean-Louis Sarbib, Senior Vice-President, Human Development, World Bank

In his lead commentary to the second half of the session, Mr Sarbib provided the High-Level Group with a general overview of FTI experience, speaking on the nature of the initiative, its achievements and challenges, and also its future prospects.

As Mr Sarbib emphasized throughout his presentation, the FTI is not just a key mechanism for resources mobilization, but also – and perhaps above all – a means for improving aid effectiveness. The FTI is governed by the principles of partnership and country-ownership. In line with the commitments made in Monterrey and Paris, the FTI serves to harmonize and align donor efforts around a coherent national plan that covers the education sector within a broader strategy for poverty reduction. The FTI ensures that decision-making about development priorities takes place at the country level.

The FTI has gained a high degree of international recognition among policy-makers, and has helped to place education issues at the front and centre of the world's development agenda. 2005 has been a defining year for the FTI. The G8, the Commission for Africa Report and the UN Millennium Review Summit have all recognised the crucial importance of the FTI compact. The FTI has emerged as an important channel for accelerating progress towards universal primary completion (UPC). Over the past year alone the number of partner countries benefiting from FTI support in this area has grown from thirteen to eighteen. The commitments of the Catalytic Fund – which provides resources when donors are lacking – has also increased from US\$40 million in 2004 to US\$140 million annually in 2006 and 2007.

But challenges still remain. As Mr Sarbib pointed out, efforts in particular need to be made to ensure that ODA is better targeted to basic education in low-income countries. The FTI has already started to reorient aid flows in this direction. However, of the US\$62.3 billion of ODA provided to developing countries, only US\$6 billion goes to education, and of that just US\$1.7 billion to basic education.

In order to increase the volume and quality of aid, FTI requires increased commitments on the part of both donors and developing countries. Countries need to focus more on developing education sector plans that are compatible with the overall development priorities of the country and that promote the type of multi-sectoral planning needed to tackle such obstacles as child labour, gender inequalities and HIV/AIDS. Countries also need to address structural issues such as corruption and user fees, as well as make greater efforts to monitor and report on results and to exercise stronger leadership in coordinating donors around their priorities. For donors, their responsibility lies in meeting aid commitments, and in harmonizing and aligning their support behind country priorities and procedures.

5.4 How effective is the FTI?

In the presentations that followed, panellists affirmed the value of the FTI as a mechanism for facilitating donor coordination and strengthening country leadership of education development. As the representative of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) argued, one of the FTI's greatest strengths has been its ability to bring together the donor technical community on a global level in order to facilitate greater donor resource coordination within countries.

A good example of the value of the FTI for a country willing to take strong leadership in education is given by Mozambique. Mozambique has adopted a sector-wide approach to education planning, which coordinates donor support around national priorities. Within its education sector plan, the government places a strong emphasis on inter-ministerial collaboration, decentralized policies, broad and transparent partnerships, and results-based monitoring. With FTI endorsement – received by Mozambique in 2003 – the government hopes to fund a major curricula reform aimed at ensuring that all children receive the skills needed to meet the challenges that they face in daily life. This reform is judged essential both for achieving UPC, and the EFA goals of quality and gender equality. With the help of the FTI, Mozambique is also setting up a code of conduct to guide dialogue between the government and donors, with the aim of improving the alignment of aid with country priorities.

The experience of Pakistan provides a very different perspective on the FTI. In 2002 Pakistan and four other high-population countries were invited to join a separate 'Analytical Fast Track' that would provide support for capacity-building and education sector planning to help countries meet the FTI eligibility criteria. However, the FTI process has proved extremely slow. Pakistan has received little analytical support in the above areas, and there has been a lack of clarity in the relationship with donors as to whether and when funding will be available. Pakistan has made considerable progress in the development of an education sector plan that places UPE and gender equality at its core. The programme for education sector reform has received presidential support, and a steady and continued increase in investment. However, despite such progress Pakistan still lacks the FTI endorsement it requires to help mobilize additional resources and coordinate donor practices. Support in particular is needed in the following areas: to ensure that aid covers all geographical units of the country; to encourage donors to provide direct budget support in alignment with country policies; and to strengthen technical and institutional capacity for the disbursement and absorption of aid.

Other panellists drew attention to more general challenges for FTI. The representative of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) drew particular attention to the fact that the volume of aid still falls far behind the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 estimate of the US\$7 billion required annually to achieve just two of the EFA goals – let alone the US\$10 billion now considered a more realistic estimate by the United Kingdom Government. Moreover, resource mobilization for endorsed countries remains slow and unpredictable, and the initiative far too narrow in its geographical coverage. The spokesman for USAID also referred to larger structural problems in the aid architecture. He argued that basic education initiatives were fragmented and often seen to be competing for funds, referring in particular to the lack of coordination between the FTI and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI).

Still, although panellists agreed that there were many areas for improvement in the FTI, there was also strong agreement that the Initiative remains the best mechanism for realizing the global partnership envisaged at Dakar. Panellists were keen to point out

ways of strengthening the FTI. Among their suggestions were:

- ▷ Ensure that there are mechanisms for holding donors as well as developing countries to account for their behaviour.
- ▷ Set ambitious expansion targets – a target of 40-50 countries by the end of 2006.
- ▷ Reach out to countries with severe education challenges and substantial financing gaps. This includes special measures to provide decentralized financing to large federal states such as Pakistan. This may also include considering a parallel approach for donor coordination in fragile states.
- ▷ Encourage country-driven strategies that promote multi-sectoral partnerships, that include inter-ministerial co-operation and the broad involvement of civil society, the private sector and other EFA stakeholders.
- ▷ Ensure that financial support is integrated with technical and analytical support to strengthen country capacity.
- ▷ Continue to take the lead in implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness by ensuring that donor actions are coordinated and in line with a country's specific goals and needs in education.

5.5 The way forward

In the concluding debate participants revealed a strong willingness to work together in partnership to increase aid to education and improve its effectiveness. They firmly endorsed country-ownership as the guiding principle in such endeavours, arguing that donors must align their support with country plans and policies, and countries themselves take the lead in harmonizing donor actions around a coherent education plan.

The High-Level Group agreed that the FTI was the most effective mechanism for strengthening this partnership and reinforcing country ownership. Panellists argued that progress here required efforts on both sides of the compact. On the one hand, donors must maintain the commitments they made in the Paris Declaration, and their actions in this direction must be clearly monitored. In aligning their actions with country requirements, donors need in particular to work towards improving the predictability and durability of aid. This

is essential to the long-term planning required in effective education reform. Donors must also work to substantially increase their volume of investment. As one participant noted, despite recent increases the Catalytic Fund remains inadequate to meet even the needs of those few countries that have already been endorsed. On the other hand, countries must show an increased commitment to basic education, and place EFA as a national priority in terms of both financial investment and planning. Donors also underlined that, as more aid is provided through direct budget support, then countries will have to show greater transparency and a more results-oriented framework for development. Finally, donors urged developing country governments to broaden the engagement of EFA stakeholders in decision-making processes, and establish greater inter-ministerial cooperation.

The High-Level Group also discussed the need for innovative methods for raising greater resources for education. Participants endorsed the pilot International Finance Facility, as well as the suggestions made by ministers for a broader use of debt swaps and stronger public-private partnerships.

While concern was voiced as to the potential conflict of interests raised by the latter, the High-Level Group in general regarded carefully regulated private sector involvement in education to be an important source of finance and expertise. The High-Level Group also discussed the potential of triangular modalities of co-operation, where donors provide developing countries with the necessary funds to use their expertise to support LDCs. This suggestion was made within the High-Level Group's larger proposal to strengthen South-South cooperation and to encourage developing countries to exchange good practices of resource mobilization and methods of donor harmonization.

The final theme to this session's discussion was the importance of targeting aid towards countries of greatest needs. The High-Level Group noted with concern the lack of funding for fragile states and those furthest away from achieving the EFA goals. Participants argued that such countries not only required financial aid but also technical and analytical assistance. As the High-Level Group affirmed, no country must be left behind in the world's progress towards EFA.

6 Conclusion

Five years on from Dakar it is important to take the stock of the world's progress in EFA. Solid foundations have been laid – the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, the Fast Track Initiative, the Global Action Plan, the United Nations Girls Education Initiative and other flagships – none of these existed five years ago. In terms of partnership we can point, among other things, to consistent civil society engagement, the E-9 dynamic and the experience of the High-Level Group itself. In its next phase, EFA faces the need for diverse approaches – reaching the under-served and the marginalized will take not just more of the same, but new approaches and consistent teamwork.

This meeting of the High-Level Group addressed two substantive areas where this is the case: literacy and the education of rural people. This report makes clear that new initiatives, new energy, greater imagination and a close attention to context will be necessary both for achieving the adult literacy goal as well as for including in EFA the neglected groups of rural areas. Of course, one meeting and its messages cannot by itself move the world to a different approach. However, both the evidence of the EFA Global Monitoring Report and the outcomes of the meeting, expressed in the Communiqué, provide the platform for tackling these challenges. Each participant in the meeting has the responsibility to take the next steps in their own situation.

This year the High-Level Group gave special attention to improving EFA teamwork internationally – in two ways. First, the growing role of South-South cooperation was further acknowledged and reinforced – a theme taken up later by the E-9 Initiative in their own meeting in Monterrey, Mexico, 13-15 February 2006. The linkages between these mechanisms – the High-Level Group and the E-9 Ministerial Review meeting – are themselves indicators of increasing synergy and joint commitment. Second, discussion of the Global Action Plan showed clearly the desire for stronger leadership from UNESCO and for greater complementarity and coherence among the international actors who support EFA. Coordinated country by country under government leadership, the wish to work together will bear fruit in more focused effort towards EFA.

Building on the experience of the past five years, the positive and concrete ethos of the 2005 High-Level Group bodes well for the future. This kind of dialogue remains a central pillar of achieving progress in EFA – progress that is ultimately seen in the eager face of a girl looking forward to tomorrow's classes, a woman's satisfaction in writing to her family, a boy's wonder at understanding the flora of his local environment, or a man's determination, whatever it costs, to see all his children complete their schooling.

8 Appendices

I. Communiqué from the Fifth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All

1. *We, Heads of State, ministers, heads and top officials of multilateral and bilateral agencies, and leaders of non-governmental organizations, met in Beijing from 28 to 30 November 2005, at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO, for the fifth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, whose central theme was literacy and education for rural people. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our Chinese hosts for their warm hospitality and excellent logistical support.*
 2. *The meeting was enriched by the deliberations of the Technical Meeting of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, the Third Round Table on the Elimination of Child Labour and the partners of the Fast Track Initiative. The Sino-African Education Ministers Forum stressed the importance of education within locally-driven development and as a means of respecting cultural diversity.*
 3. *Our discussions have taken place at the end of a significant year for global development. At the United Nations World Summit in September 2005, and as called for in our 2004 Brasilia Communiqué, world leaders emphasized the critical role of education in the achievement of the MDGs and reaffirmed support for the implementation of Education for All.*
 4. *The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 makes clear that additional progress has been made towards the 2015 goals: about 70 countries have increased the share of national budgets devoted to education, 20 million more children are in school in the regions of sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia, South-South cooperation is flourishing and aid to basic education more than doubled between 1999 and 2003.*
 5. *Nevertheless, the 2005 gender parity goal has been missed. One hundred million children are still out of school and more than 771 million adults remain illiterate – the majority of whom are female and live in rural areas. In addition, the increasing effects of natural disasters, civil unrest, social violence, HIV & AIDS and other pandemics, and deepening poverty threaten the capacity of countries to achieve the EFA goals. Current rates of progress in enrolling more children in school still need to double in South Asia and quadruple in sub-Saharan Africa in order to reach the 2015 goal of providing all children with a complete education of good quality. Educating children, particularly girls, along with the education of their mothers, will substantially contribute to the fulfilment of the EFA goals.*
 6. *As school enrolments expand worldwide, we must acknowledge and address the teacher shortage crises facing nations. It is projected that 60 million new teachers, in addition to filling the current shortage in existing ranks, must be recruited and trained if we are to successfully fulfil the EFA goals by 2015.*
 7. *There is an enduring finance gap of at least \$5 billion per annum, according to estimates of the EFA Global Monitoring Report. New pledges of significant increases in development assistance and debt relief must be translated into additional resources for education in general and EFA in particular, and used efficiently in accordance with the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration.*
 8. *EFA will only be fully successful when currently marginalized children and adults complete school and workforce preparation programmes which they can use to improve their lives. This outcome – not just access, but also success in learning for all – is the finality which the following commitments are designed to achieve. In the spirit of a mutual compact among developing countries, donor agencies, multilateral agencies and civil society, we commit ourselves to promoting inclusion, equity and quality through actions in the following three areas – literacy, education for rural people, and gender parity and equality.*
- Literacy*
9. *Given the low priority of adult literacy in national budgets and development assistance, and the continuous need for schools to attract and retain children for a full cycle of basic education, we recommend that **Governments and EFA partners:***
 - ▷ *Demonstrate political commitment by integrating literacy into education sector plans, based on the recognition of the fundamental importance for enjoying the right to education;*
 - ▷ *Give higher priority to literacy in formulating education budgets;*
 - ▷ *Implement a three-pronged strategy for literacy:*
 - *quality education for all;*
 - *significant expansion of targeted literacy, adult*

learning and continuing education programmes, using appropriate adult learning strategies and improving the training and conditions of facilitators;

- the development of sustainable literate environments.

10. **Funding agencies** are encouraged to work with governments to provide significant and regular funding and capacity development for effective literacy programmes.

11. We welcome the UNESCO Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) as a significant new strategy for achieving literacy for all within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade and urge close collaboration.

Education for rural people

12. Since the majority of those left behind and excluded from education live in rural areas, education for rural people is vital and urgent.

13. We recommend that Governments and EFA partners:

- ▷ Invest more to reach and serve successfully the poorest, minorities, migrants, unorganized workers and other disadvantaged groups through best practices and other beneficial policies;
- ▷ Design and implement targeted strategies, an intersectoral approach and strong partnerships to cater to the diversity of situations and needs;
- ▷ In order to address the serious gap in the availability of teachers, design and urgently support strategies of teacher mobilization and training programmes, including the UNESCO Teacher Training Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa. Where teachers remain insufficient in numbers, create alternative strategies and programmes.
- ▷ Promote the quality of teaching and learning, with special attention to the strategies for placing, supporting and retaining qualified and trained teachers in rural areas, and improving their working conditions;
- ▷ Implement innovative measures, including curriculum reform, distance learning, non-formal education and application of ICTs, to improve relevance, respecting

the diversity of local culture and languages, validating local knowledge and adopting flexible calendars;

Gender parity and equality

14. In order to ensure that the 2005 gender parity target, which has been missed in 94 countries, is met without further delay, we recommend that **Governments and EFA partners**:

- ▷ Implement strategies to boost girls' participation and female literacy. These will include removing cost barriers and strengthening schools as gender-sensitive centres of quality learning, care and protection, in line with the recommendations of the UNGEI Technical meeting.
- ▷ Scale up efforts significantly to enable girls to attend and complete their education, including gender-sensitive learning content and school environments.
- ▷ Include in all sector plans clearly defined gender outcomes and targets in support of gender parity and equality, as well as budget lines for specific actions in favour of girls and women (and in some countries boys and men), including capacity development.

Joint Action Plan

15. We endorse the development of the proposed draft Joint Action Plan for Achieving EFA by 2015, to be further elaborated by UNESCO in close consultation with the main global partners and presented to the UNESCO Executive Board at its spring session 2006. Its aim is a more strategic and coherent approach to achieve all six EFA goals. The Plan should set objectives, targets and timelines for the implementation process.

16. We recommend that UNESCO convene the Heads of the five convening agencies of Jomtien and Dakar at the latest by mid-2006 to discuss and, if possible, affirm the Plan.

17. We request UNESCO and the other EFA partners to encourage and support South-South cooperation, mutual learning and exchange at the regional level, including strengthening the E-9 network and other groupings as platforms for doing so. This will include cooperation on a triangular basis.

18. We encourage UNESCO to strengthen its capacity to perform its role of coordinating the EFA process at the international level and provide strategic support at regional and country levels.

Financial resources and capacity development

19. Pledges by the donor community, estimated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to amount to US\$50 billion per annum by 2010, including the announcement by the G8 and the Development Committee of the World Bank to increase and accelerate debt relief, should result in significant benefits for education. We urge that these promises be translated into real resources and that education receive the high priority that it deserves, within the country's overall development and poverty reduction strategy. We recognize that to achieve the UPE goal by 2015 all students must be enrolled in school by 2008. We recommend that:

- ▷ Countries increase the proportion of national budgets allocated to basic education to meet the scale and the scope of the national EFA challenge as expressed in their national education plan.
- ▷ Within an increased budget, countries and EFA partners raise significantly the percentage devoted to adult literacy and continuing education. The 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report estimates that US\$2.5 billion per year will be needed to make significant progress towards the EFA literacy goal.
- ▷ Countries should work with EFA partners to progressively remove both formal and informal school fee barriers, so as to enable all children, and in particular girls, to attend and complete primary schooling by 2015. They should also provide appropriate incentives to the poorest families, such as school grants, to support their children's education.
- ▷ In order to improve their capacity to maintain quality while absorbing the impact of enhanced enrolments, FTI and EFA partners will need to give prompt and long-term support to governments of developing countries that take these bold initiatives.
- ▷ Donors should close the external funding gap for EFA by making all efforts to double current levels of ODA to education and, in line with the needs identified in the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report, give higher

priority to basic education. Also in accordance with the Report, particular emphasis should be given to the education needs of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

- ▷ FTI be expanded as a means of mobilizing additional funds and technical assistance, as well as a forum for donor coordination and policy dialogue. Funds will be allocated according to national priorities articulated in education sector plans and aligned with sound public financial frameworks, for all low-income countries including fragile states.
 - ▷ EFA partners explore the potential of such new and innovative financing mechanisms as may be adopted, for example, an International Finance Facility, an airline solidarity tax and debt swaps, for mobilizing resources for EFA.
 - ▷ Aid be made more effective, in the education sector, in accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability, with the FTI serving as a mechanism to promote good practice, and donors harmonizing their administrative and budgetary procedures, with the aim of ensuring effective implementation of national plans and reducing the burden on partner countries.
 - ▷ EFA partners ensure that adequate attention is given to further building the capacity of countries to monitor and evaluate progress in EFA, including the collection and use of disaggregated and improved data that capture sub-national realities, as evidence for formulating policy and documenting good practices at the country and regional levels.
20. We acknowledge that child labour is a major obstacle to achieving EFA. We welcome the establishment of the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education as a further step in enabling children to stop working and enjoy a quality education. We endorse its proposed role for advocacy, coordination and research in this field.
21. We recommend that civil society organizations and networks strengthen their involvement in planning, implementation, and evaluation of and advocacy in favour of achieving EFA goals within the framework of national EFA strategies, working in coordination with governments.

22. We request UNESCO and other EFA partners to increase support to countries in planning and monitoring, including capturing the most efficient approaches to achieve maximum results.

23. Finally, we resolve to use our individual and collective energies, resources and influence to implement these commitments with the urgency which the continuing challenge of EFA requires. As partners in EFA, we will intensify our action, recognizing that the year 2005 represents a pivotal moment for the international community and we pledge ourselves to the extra efforts necessary if we are to reach the 2015 EFA targets.

24. We recommend that funding agencies and government partners provide to UNESCO, by the end of March 2006, information on our agreed financial commitments to the achievement of the EFA goals.

The way forward

25. We ask that in its global progress review, the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report should pay close attention to the performance of those countries that are currently off track in reaching the EFA and Millennium Development Goals, especially but not exclusively in relation to: the gender, UPE and literacy goals;

the levels and types of aid to basic education to the countries with the deepest needs; the policies being implemented by countries making the most rapid progress towards the 2015 goals; and monitoring the progress of pledges made by donors.

26. During 2006, EFA partners will ensure visibility for the recommendations of this Communiqué at the Summit on Education and Culture of the African Union in January, the meeting of the Education Ministers of the E-9 group of high population countries in Mexico in February, the spring session of UNESCO's Executive Board, the spring meetings of the World Bank/IMF Development Committee, and other such forums.

27. In view of the high profile likely to be given to EFA at the G8 Summit in the Russian Federation in June 2006, EFA partners will use the opportunity to urge G8 members to implement their commitments to increase development assistance and accelerate debt relief.

Next meeting

28. We welcome the invitation of the government of Egypt to host the next meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All on 14 – 16 November 2006, on the theme of early childhood development and education.

II. Opening address of the Director-General of UNESCO

Mr Prime Minister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the fifth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA). I am particularly delighted that we are meeting in Beijing.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to our Chinese hosts for their warm welcome and their excellent cooperation in organizing this event. My deep appreciation goes to the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, Mr Wen Jiabao, for being here to open this meeting and for his stimulating opening address. It was most encouraging to learn of his government's firm determination to vigorously pursue all six EFA goals and also to help other developing countries in their efforts to achieve those goals.

Furthermore, my special thanks go to my co-chairman of this event, the Minister of Education, Mr Zhou Ji, with whom it has been a pleasure to collaborate. We are greatly honoured by the presence here today of the President of Mongolia, Mr Nambaryn Enkhbayar; HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand; and the Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr Arthur Zahidi N'Goma. I look forward very much to their remarks on this auspicious occasion.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet at a highly significant time. I would like to suggest three main reasons why this is so.

First, this year has seen a series of international events which will have an impact on our work. The G8 countries, meeting at Gleneagles, United Kingdom, in July, promised increases in development assistance that would reach an additional US\$ 50 billion annually by 2010. This will be the largest increase in aid since the 1960s.

As key members of the global EFA movement, these decisions leave us with a dual responsibility: on the one hand, we must watch carefully to see that promises become reality, and, on the other hand, we must work hard and consistently to ensure that significant new and additional resources are made

available to the education sector as a whole and to basic education in particular. Our deliberations this week must give real impetus to the discharge of these responsibilities.

In September this year, the world's leaders met in New York to review progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other development targets. The resulting outcome gave a special place to EFA, locating it squarely within the context of the role of education in addressing wider development agendas. For the first time, world leaders collectively reaffirmed the Dakar Framework for Action and, I am naturally pleased to note, recognized UNESCO's role in promoting EFA as a tool of poverty eradication.

In October, over 100 ministers of education, including many participants present here today, took part in the Ministerial Round Table on EFA during UNESCO's General Conference, whose overarching theme was EFA. The Round Table's Communiqué provides a strong platform for our discussions this week, especially the sense of mutuality in matching policy commitments in developing countries with funding commitments on the part of donor countries. We need to make further progress in this direction in the days ahead.

The second reason why this is a watershed year is because it is now five years since we adopted the six EFA goals in Dakar. We can celebrate some significant progress. As the *2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report* makes clear, more girls are in school than ever before, with striking improvements in some of the most difficult situations, such as low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia. National spending on basic education as well as external aid to EFA have risen. Overall, 20 million new students are in school in each of the regions I have just mentioned.

My third point focuses on the huge challenges that remain. We are now one-third of the way through our journey to 2015 – we have ten years left. It is clear from this year's *EFA Global Monitoring Report* that we are not doing well in addressing the literacy needs of adults. It is intolerable that 18 per cent of the world's adults have no access to written communication and are therefore excluded from active participation in important aspects of their societies. It is also clear that the quality of basic education remains low and will not lead to meaningful learning outcomes unless tackled with renewed vigour.

Above all, in this year of 2005, we are acutely conscious that we have collectively missed the gender parity target in primary and secondary schooling. In fact, unless current trends improve, the target may not even be achieved by 2015 in as many as 86 countries! This is a wake-up call to all of us and must concentrate our minds, not only here but in our daily work in education as we set priorities and allocate resources.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Against the backdrop of these significant events and factors, we will focus our discussion on a

number of central issues. Building on the data and analysis of the most recent *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, we will consider ways forward in addressing literacy needs and in repositioning ourselves to achieve the gender parity goal. As far as literacy is concerned, I have repeatedly called upon EFA partners and governments to devote greater efforts to reaching the EFA goal for literacy, and I issue that call again here.

Among the groups which are marginalized from mainstream efforts in EFA are those living in rural areas. Some rural populations are not well served by existing school systems; the answer is not more of the same – instead, we need to be innovative and change our approaches. Our deliberations must engender a far-reaching re-assessment of policies and strategies to reach the excluded, especially those in rural areas.

I am particularly looking forward to the input of the High-Level Group to the elaboration of the Joint Action Plan in EFA. By achieving common ownership of its principal lines of joint action, we will be able to offer better concrete support at national level to countries in implementing EFA.

We will spend time – very necessary time – looking at the mobilization of resources, particularly at the role of the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) which received specific mention in the outcome of the World Summit in September. As noted earlier, this year may prove to be a turning point in the provision of further resources for development. Generating additional resources for education, especially basic education, both nationally and internationally, and using those resources more effectively, harmonizing approaches and doing all this

under clear and dynamic national leadership – these are some of the issues which we must address.

As we look forward to the next two years, UNESCO, in collaboration with its EFA partners and the Global Monitoring Report Team, will work towards the preparation of a comprehensive mid-term review of progress towards the EFA goals in 2007-2008. UNESCO is currently elaborating a working plan for coordinating the comprehensive mid-term review.

This meeting of the High-Level Group takes place, therefore, at a critical juncture. Our deliberations over the next two days, and the resulting communiqué, will shape other events in 2006: the African Union Summit in January, whose special theme is Education and Culture; the meeting of the Education Ministers of the E-9 group of high-population countries in Mexico in February; the spring session of UNESCO's Executive Board; and the spring meeting of the World Bank/IMF Development Committee.

In conclusion, let me repeat what I stressed earlier: we have ONLY ten years left until 2015. Let us together continue to strengthen political will and build momentum for EFA not only through gatherings such as those I have mentioned but also through other events where the EFA message needs to be heard. Let us build on the solid and steady achievements already visible and determine together that the challenge before us, while daunting, is not insurmountable. Let us never forget that the life chances of millions of adults and children depend, in significant measure, on our response.

Thank you.

III. List of participants

1. Heads of State/ Government and keynote speakers

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

■ H. E. Mr Wen Jiabao
Prime Minister

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

■ H. E. Mr Arthur Zahidi N'Goma
Vice-President
Tel: +243 99 52 374
E-mail: kampempe@yahoo.fr
Attn: Délégation permanente de la
République
Démocratique du Congo auprès de
l'UNESCO
Maison de l'UNESCO 1, rue Miollis 75732
Paris Cedex 15 - France
Tel : +33 1 45 68 34 23; Fax : +33 1 42 89
80 09
Tel : +243 77 77 199 (Chargée de mission)

MONGOLIA

■ H. E. Mr Nambaryn Enkhbayar
President
State House
Oulan-Bator – 12
C/o The Permanent Delegation of
Mongolia
5, Avenue Robert-Schumann
92100 Boulogne-Billancourt – France

THAILAND

■ Crown Princess of Thailand
UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador
Bangkok, Thailand
C/o Permanent Delegation of Thailand
UNESCO House
1, rue Miollis 75732, Paris Cedex 15
– France
Tel: +33 1 45 68 31 22 / 23
Fax: +33 1 45 68 31 24

2. Ministers

Ministers of Education

BANGLADESH

■ H. E. Dr M. Osman Farruk
Minister of Education, Ministry of
Education
Dhaka – Bangladesh
Tel: +8802 7161395 / +8322722
Fax: +8802 7163322
E-mail: moe1@bdoom.com

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Fatima Rabab
Minister, Bangladesh Embassy
E-mail: rababfa@yahoo.com

■ Mr A.K.M. Shamsuddin
Secretary
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
E-mail: scymopme@bdcom.com

BRAZIL

■ Mr Ricardo Henriques
Vice-Minister of Education
Ministerio da Educação
Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco "L", sala
824
Brasilia, DF. - cep: 70047-900
Tel: +55 6121 048432; Fax: +556 141
09670
E-mail: ricardohenriques@mec.gov.br

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Alessandro Candeas
Head of Office for International Affairs,
MOE
E-mail: alessandro.candeas@mec.gov.br

■ Mrs Claudia Maria Paes de Carvalho
Baena Soares
Deputy Head of the International Affairs
Unit, MOE
E-mail: claudiasoares@mec.gov.br

CAMBODIA

■ H. E. Mr Im Sethy
Secretary of State
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
(MEYS)
No 80 Norodom Blvd., Phnom Penh
Tel: +23 217 253; Fax: +23 212 512
E-mail: iec@everyday.com.kh

Accompanied by:

■ H. E. Dr Nath Bunroeun
Under-Secretary of State, MEYS

■ Mr Sam Sereyraph
Planning Director, MEYS

■ Mr Om Sethy
Director of Information and ASEAN Affairs
Dept. MEYS

■ Mrs Hang Phary
Official of Pedagogical Research Dept.,
MEYS

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

■ H. E. Mr Zhou Ji
Minister of Education
NatCom of the People's Republic of China
37, Damucanghutong, Xidan
Beijing 100816
Tel: +86 10 609 68 44 / +86 10 609 66 49
Fax: +86 10 601 79 12

Accompanied by

■ Mr Zhang Xinsheng
Vice-Minister, MOE

■ Ms Chen Xiaoya
Vice-Minister, MOE

■ Mr Mu Yangchun
Director-General
General Administration Office, MOE

■ Mr Wu Guokai
Deputy Director-General
General Administration Office, MOE

■ Mr Du Kewei
Division Director
General Administration Office, MOE

■ Mr Sun Xiaobing
Director-General
Dept. of Education Policy and Legislation,
MOE

■ Mr Han Jin
Director-General
Dept. of Education Planning, MOE

■ Mr Lin Zhihua
Division Director (Statistics)
Dept. of Education Planning, MOE

■ Mr Chen Weiguang
Deputy Director-General
Dept. of Finance, MOE

■ Mr Jiang Peimin
Director-General
Dept. of Basic Education, MOE

■ Mr Yang Jin
Deputy Director-General
Dept. of Basic Education, MOE

■ Mr Zheng Fuzhi
Director-General
Office of Inspection, MOE

■ Ms Cheng Jinhui
Division Director
Office of Inspection, MOE

■ Mr Zhou Mansheng
Deputy Director-General
National Center for Education
Development Research, MOE

Mr Chen Jianjun
Deputy Director-General
Dept. of International Cooperation and
Exchanges, MOE

■ Mr Liu Baoli
Deputy Director-General

■ Dept. of International Cooperation and Exchanges, MOE

■ Mr Xue Yanqing
Division Director (Asian & African Affairs)
Dept. of International Cooperation and Exchanges, MOE

■ Ms Jing Wei
Programme Officer and Interpreter
Dept. of International Cooperation and Exchanges, MOE

■ H. E. Mr Zhang Xuezhong
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of China to UNESCO
E-mail: dl.chine1@unesco.org

■ Mr Tian Xiaogang
Secretary-General
National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO
E-mail: natcomcn@public3.bta.net.cn

■ Mr Du Yue
Deputy Secretary General, NatCom China

■ Ms Dong Jianhong
Director, Education Division, NatCom China

■ Mr Wang Yibing
Adviser in Education, NatCom China

■ Mr Zhou Nanzhao
Director, International Center for Rural Education Research, Training and Boarding, NatCom China

■ Mr Xie Weihe
Vice President, Qinghua University, NatCom China

■ Mr Dong Qi
Vice-President
Beijing Normal University, NatCom China

■ Mr Zhou Wei
Shanghai Academy of Education Science, NatCom China

■ Mr Wang Dinghua
Specialist in Basic Education and Literacy, NatCom China

CUBA

■ H. E. Mr Luis Ignacio Gómez Gutiérrez
Minister of Education
Calle 17 Esq, O Vedado Ciudad de la Habana
Tel: +53 7 552 930; Fax: +53 7 552930
E-mail: despacho@mined.rimed.eu

Accompanied by:

Mr Luis E Rodriguez
Asesor del Ministro, MOE

EGYPT

■ H. E. Prof. Ahmed Gamal El-din Moussa
Minister of Education, Ministry of Education
Silver Tower, 12 Waked Street Z
Code 836 Cairo
Tel: +202 578 7644; Fax: +202 796 2952

Accompanied by:

■ Prof. Dr. Ibrahim S. Shehata
Technical Advisor, MOE

■ Mr Mohamed Salah
Bureau Technique du Ministre, MOE
Dr. Amany S. El-Boghdady
Consultant, MOE

GUYANA

■ H. E. Dr Henry Jeffrey
Minister of Education
26 Brickdam, Georgetown
Tel: +592 226 3094
Fax: +592 225 5570 or +592 225 5067
E-mail: hjeffrey@moe.gov.gy / hb945@hotmail.com

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Deborah Jack
EFA-FTI Coordinator in Guyana, MOE

INDIA

■ H. E. Dr. B. L Mungekar
Member Education Planning Commission
Minister of State, Government of India
Sansad Marg, New Delhi 110001
Tel: +91 11 23096767; Fax: +91 11 23096622
E-mail: blmungekar@yahoo.com

Accompanied by:

■ H. E. Ms Bhaswati Mukherjee
Permanent Delegate of India to UNESCO
E-mail: dl.india1@unesco.org

■ Mrs Anuradha Gupta
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development

■ Mr Mohan Kumar
Director, Directorate of Adult Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development

■ Mr Sanjay Verma
Counsellor (IC)
Embassy of India, Beijing – China

■ Mr Sujit Ghosh
Second Secretary
Embassy of India, Beijing – China

INDONESIA

■ H. E. Mr Bambang Sudibyo
Minister of National Education
Ministry of National Education (MONE)
Jalan Jenderal Sudirman Pintu 1, Senayan Jakarta

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Fasli Jalal
Director-General of quality Improvement of Teachers and Educational Personnel, MONE

■ Dr Ace Suryadi
Director General of Non Formal Education, MONE

■ Dr Ir. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto
Head, Bureau of Planning and International Cooperation, MONE

■ Mr I. Dewa Gde Oka Wiwaha
Head, Bureau of General Affairs, MONE

■ Mr Joko Nugroho
Assistant
Bureau of Planning and International Cooperation, MONE

■ Mr Joko Pratomo
Technical Assistant
Bureau of Planning and International Cooperation, MONE

KENYA

■ Prof. George I. Godia
Education Secretary
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)
P.O. Box 30040, 00100 Nairobi
Tel: +254 20 318518; Fax: + 25420 34 18 75
E-mail: godiaes@yahoo.com / es@education.go.ke

Accompanied by:

■ Mr David Siele
Director of Higher Education, MEST
E-mail: sieledav@yahoo.com

■ Ms Mary Njoroge
Director of Basic Education, MEST
E-mail: mwnjoroge@hotmail.com

MALI

■ Mr Barthélemy Togo
Secrétaire général du Ministère de l'éducation
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale
B. P. 119 Bamako
Tel: +223 223 37 67; Fax: +223 223 37 67

Accompanied by:

■ Mr A.G. Sidalamine Zeidan
Prémier Conseiller
Ambassade du Mali, Beijing

MEXICO

■ H. E. Mr Reyes Tamez Guerra
State Secretary for Public Education
C/o Comisión Mexicana de Cooperación con la UNESCO (CONALMEX)
Donceles No. 100, 2° piso
06020 Centro Histórico, México D.F.,
Tel: +52 55 53 29 6940; Fax: +52 55 53 29 6943

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Isabel Farha
Director of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Public Education
E-mail: ifarha@sep.gob.mx

■ Mr Ramon de la Peña
President, Consejo Nacional de Education para la vida y el trabajo
E-mail: rdelapena@inea.gob.mx

■ Mr Jose Maria Fraustro
Consejo Nacional de Education para la vida y el trabajo

MONGOLIA

■ H. E. Mr Punstag Tsagaan
Minister of Education, Culture and Science (MECS)
Government Bldg III, Baga – Toiruu – 44 Ulaanbaatar
Tel: +976 51 262480; Fax: +976 11 323158
E-mail: tsagaan@meecs.pmis.gov.mn

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Norov Urtnasan
Secretary General of the Mongolia National Commission for UNESCO
E-mail: mon.unesco@mongol.net

■ Mr Davaasuren Tserenpil
Director of Finance Department, MECS
E-mail: Davaasuren@meecs.pmis.gov.mn

■ Mr Batbold Gombosuren
Head of General Education Division, MECS
E-mail: batbold@meecs.pmis.gov.mn

■ Mr Bayar Dugersuren
Head of Tertiary Education Division, MECS
E-mail: bayar@meecs.pmis.gov.mn

■ Ms D. Erdenechimeg
Senior Officer, MECS
E-mail: erdene@meecs.pmis.gov.mn

■ Ms Munkhjin Bayan Jargal
Officer, International Cooperation Division, MECS
E-mail: Munkhjin@meecs.pmis.gov.mn

MOZAMBIQUE

■ H. E. Mr Aires Bonifácio Ali
Minister of Education and Culture
Av. 24 de Julho 167, Caixa Postal 34, Maputo
Tel: +258 1 490 998; Fax: +258 1 490 979
E-mail: GabMinistro@mined.gov.mz

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Luis Cezerilo
Adviser of the Minister
Ministry of Education and culture
E-mail: cezerilo@mec.gov.mz

■ Ms Cristina Daniel Matere Tomo
National Director of General Education
Ministry of Education and culture

■ Mr Filipe José Couto
Rector of the Catholic University of Mozambique
Tel: +258 23 313077; Fax: +258 23 311520
E-mail: fjcouto@teledata.mz

■ Ms Elia Bila
Deputy Director of Language Institute
E-mail: d-pedagogogica@tvcabo.co.mz

NIGERIA

■ H. E. Mrs Chinwa Nora Obaji
Minister of Education
Federal Ministry of Education, Federal Secretariat
Shagari Way, P.M.B. 146, Abuja – Nigeria
Tel: +234 952 32800; Fax: +234 952 37839

Accompanied by:

■ Mrs Mariam Y. Katagum
Secretary-General
Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO,
E-mail: natcomunesco@nigeriafirst.org

■ Dr. Ahmed Oyinlola
Executive Secretary
National Commission for Mass Literacy Adult and Non Formal Education

■ Mall. Mustapha Jaji
Executive Secretary
Education Trust Fund

■ Mrs. Uche Amadi
Special Assistant to the Honourable Minister,
Federal Ministry of Education

■ Ms Bridget O. Momah
Assistant Director, EFA
Federal Ministry of Education
E-mail: EFA@nigeriafirst.org

■ Mr Michael Omolewa
Ambassador
Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO
E-mail: dl.nigeria@unesco.org

■ Mrs Fatima Othman
Senior Counsellor
Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO
E-mail: dl.nigeria@unesco.org

■ Ms Heather R. Akanni
Senior Secretary
Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO
E-mail: dl.nigeria@unesco.org

■ Mr A. Modibbo Mohammed
Director, National Teachers Institute

OMAN

■ H. E. Mr. Yahya Bin Saud Al Sulaimi
Minister of Education
P.O. Box 3, Code 112
Muscat
Tel: +968.24 78.36.66 / 968.24 78.32.22
Fax: +968.24 78.55.50

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Said Bin Salim Al Kitani
Secretary General of the National Commission
Director of the Minister's Office a.i.
Ministry of Education

■ Mr Sultan Bin Seif Al Salami
Coordinator of the Minister's Office
Ministry of Education

■ H.E. Dr Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Oman to UNESCO
E-mail: m.j.bin-hassan@unesco.org

PAKISTAN

■ H. E. Mr Javed Ashraf Qazi
Minister of Education
Pak Sectt, Block "D", Islamabad 44000 – Pakistan
Tel: +92 51 9212020; Fax: +92.51 925 75 19

Accompanied by:

■ Mr T. M. Qureshi
Deputy Education Adviser
Policy and Planning, Ministry of
Education, Sector

■ Col. Khalid Hussain
Deputy Educational Adviser
Education Minister's Office

QATAR

■ H. E. Ms Sheika Al-Mahmoud
Minister of Education and Teaching
B.P. 80, Doha
Tel: +974 49 33 111; Fax: +974 49 30 337

Accompanied by:

■ H. E. Mr Abdulla Abdul Rahman Al-Moftah
Ambassador of Qatar in Beijing

■ Mr Issa Al-Ma'adid
Director Office of Minister of Education

■ H. E. Mr Ali Zainal
Permanent Delegate of Qatar to UNESCO
E-mail: dl.qatar@unesco.org

■ Mr Jaafar Karar Ahmad
Political Expert, Qatar Embassy in Beijing
– China

■ Dr Hamda Al-Sulaiti
Directeur du Département des Relations
Culturels

■ Mr Al-Abdallah Abdullatif
Coordinateur national des Ecoles
associées

■ Mme Al Hamadi Miriam
Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation

■ Mr Salah Srouf
Chef de la Division de l'UNESCO à la
Commission Nationale
Qatar National Commission for UNESCO
E-mail: Natcom@Qatar.net.qa

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

■ Mr Svinarenko Andrey
Deputy Minister of Education and Science
Ministry of Education, Moscow Tverskaya
Str.,11
Moscow 125993 –
Tel: +7 095 6292425; Fax +7 095 244 24 75

Accompanied by:

■ Mrs Gaverdovskaya Ksenia
Attaché of the Commission of the Russian
Federation for UNESCO
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow – Russia

■ Mrs Leila Lazgieva
Head of Division, Ministry of Education
and Science
E-mail: lazgieva@mon.gov.ru

■ Mr Ruslam Golubovskiy
Second Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow
– Russia

SAMOA

H. E. Ms Fiamë Naomi Matā'afa
Minister of Education, Sports and Culture
P.O. Box 1186, Apia
Tel: +685 22 971; Fax: +685 22 955
E-mail: fiamë@nus.edu.ws

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Esera Tupae
CEO-Education, Sports and Culture
E-mail: samoamesc@lesamoa.net

SENEGAL

■ H. E. Mr Moustapha Sourang
Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Malick Ndiaye
Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale

SOUTH AFRICA

■ H. E. Ms Naledi Pandor
Minister of Education
Private Bag X603, Pretoria 0001
Tel: +27 12 3125911
E-mail: multilateral@afriquesud.net

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Teboho Muja
Official Special Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Education

■ Dr Pamela Dube
Director, Higher Education
Email: dube.p@doe.gov.za

■ Dr Martyn Davies
Stenenbosh University
Director, Centre for Chinese Studies
Email: mdavies@sun.ac.za

■ Prof. Walter T. Claass
Vice-Rector
University of Stellen

■ Mr Dumisani Rasheleng
First Secretary, Education
The South African Embassy, China
Email: supersamedia@yahoo.com

■ Ms Lulama Pharasi
Chief Director, Dept. of Education
E-mail: Pharasi.l@doe.gov.za

■ Mr Pandor Sharif
Minister's Delegation

■ Mr Bhali J. A. Velaphi
Deputy Director, International Relations
Dept. of Education
E-mail: bhali.j@doe.gov.za

■ Ms Walbrugh-Parsadh
Assistant Director, International Office
Stellenbosch University
E-mail: sw2@sun.ac.za

■ Mr Nbulu Elijah
E-mail: emnt@myway.com

THAILAND

Dr Khunying Kasama Varavarn
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education (MOE)
Ratchadamnoen-Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10300
Tel: +662 628-5646 9 / 281-6370 / 281-
0565
Fax: +662 281-0953
E-mail: thainat@rmisc.moe.go.th

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Amrung Chantavanich
Secretary-General
National Education Council, MOE
E-mail: thainat@rmisc.moe.go.th

■ Mrs Savitri Suwansathit
Advisor to the Minister of Education
E-mail: thainat@rmisc.moe.go.th

■ Ms Chuachan Chongsatitoyo
Advisor to the Minister of Education
E-mail: thainat@rmisc.moe.go.th

■ Mr Chinnavet Sarasart of Education
Advisor to the Minister
E-mail: thainat@rmisc.moe.go.th

■ Ms Arunsri Anantrasirichai
Senior Advisor in Policy and Planning
Office of Basic Education
E-mail: thainat@rmisc.moe.go.th

■ Dr Siriporn Boonyananta
Deputy Secretary-General
National Education Council, MOE
E-mail: thainat@rmisc.moe.go.th

■ Dr Sombat Suwanpitak
Acting Director, Office of the Non-formal
Education Commission, MOE
E-mail: sombatsuwa@hotmail.com

■ Mr Sajja Boonthittanont
Secretary to the Minister, MOE

■ Mr Narong Pungcharnchaikun
President, Chinese Schools Association,

■ Mr Somkiat Phitchitsurakit
Chinese Schools Association of Thailand

■ Mr Paniti Tungphati
Vice-President
Chinese Schools Association of Thailand

■ Ms Tantip Amonprapawat
Board Member
Chinese Schools Association of Thailand

■ Ms Pailin Cherupech
Rajabhat University, Thonburi

■ Ms Duriya Amatavivat
Bureau of International Cooperation, MOE

■ Ms Supraanee Khamyuang
Bureau of International Cooperation, MOE

■ Mr Ballang Rohitsathira
Office of the Minister, MOE

YEMEN

■ H. E. Mr Abdul salam Mohammed Al-Joufi
Minister of Education, Ministry of Education
P.O. Box 11965, Sana'a
Tel: +96 71 7499 66 / 96 737 03130
Fax: +967 1 27 44 87
E-mail: aaljoufi@yahoo.com

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Hamoud Mohammed Al-Seyani
Head of Technical Team for the Implementation of Basic Education Development Strategy Implementation (BEDS)

Dr Ansaf Abdu Qassem Murshed
Educational Research and EFA National Coordinator, MOE
E-mail: dr_insaf@hotmail.com / insaf@yemen.net.ye

■ Dr Abdullatif Al Munifi
Head of Basic Education Development Project, MOE

Ministers/Representatives for Development Cooperation

BELGIUM

■ Monsieur Bernard Pierre
Ambassadeur de Belgique en République populaire de Chine, Beijing – China

Accompanied by:

■ Madame Michèle Deneffe
Ministre-Conseiller
Ambassade de Belgique en République populaire de Chine

■ Monsieur Kris Panneels
Directeur du service des Programmes multilatéraux et européens
Direction générale de la coopération au développement
E-mail: kris.panneels@diplobel.fed.be

■ Monsieur Philippe Gerard
Responsable pour la Banque Mondiale
Direction générale de la coopération au développement

■ Madame Nadine Dusepulchre
Responsable éducation, Service Appui à la politique,
Direction générale de la coopération au développement

CANADA

■ Mr Richard Cameron
Senior Vice-President
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
President's Office
200 Promenade du Portage Gatineau
Quebec K1A 0G4
Tel: 819 994 8208; Fax: +819 953 3352
E-mail: ric_cameron@cida.gc.ca

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Scott Walter
Principal Advisor, Education Policy Branch, CIDA
E-mail: scott_walter@acdi-cida.gc.ca

■ Mr Maysa Jalbout
Assistant Director/Senior Education Analyst, CIDA

■ Ms Suzanne Stump
Senior Education Advisor based in Maputo, CIDA –PSV
Email: Suzanne@cida-psu.com

DENMARK

■ Mr Poul Erik Rasmussen
Senior Advisor
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Asiatisk Plads 2, 1448 Copenhagen K

FRANCE

■ Mr Pierre-André Wiltzer
Envoyé Spécial du Gouvernement français
Ancien Ministre de la Coopération, du Développement et de la Francophonie
23 rue la Perouse, 75016 Paris
Tel: +33 1 43 17 63 05
E-mail: pierre-andre.wiltzer@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Accompanied by:

■ Mme Sandrine Boucher
Sous-directrice des politiques sectorielles et des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement
Direction des Politiques et de Développement
Ministère des affaires étrangères
E-mail: sandrine.boucher@diplomatie.gouv.fr

■ Mr Alain Dhersigny
Chargé de mission
Bureau de politiques éducation et de formation professionnelle
Direction des Politiques et de Développement
Ministère des affaires étrangères
E-mail :alain.dhersigny@diplomatie.gouv.fr

■ Mr Jean-Claude Balmes
Responsable de la division éducation et formation professionnelle
Département du développement humain
Agence française de développement
E-mail: balmesje@afd.fr

GERMANY

■ Dr Hans Peter Schipulle
Deputy Director General
Global and Sectoral Policies
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Adenauerallee 139-141, 53113 Bonn
Tel: +49 228 535 3750
E-mail: hans.schipulle@bmz.bund.de

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Temby Caprio
Sector Advisor, GTZ
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
E-mail: temby.caprio@bmz.bund.de

■ Dr Herbert Bergmann
GTZ Yemen
E-mail: Herbert.bergmann@gtz.de

JAPAN

■ Mr Mitoji Yabunaka
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Kasumigaseki 2-2-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
100-8919
Tel: +81 3 3580 3311
Fax: +81 3 5501 8362

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Okitsu Taeko
Chief, Education Unit
Aid Planning Division, Economic
Cooperation Bureau
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
E-mail: taeko.okitsu@mofa.go.jp
■ Mr Imasato Yuzuru
Minister-Counsellor, Permanent
Delegation of Japan to UNESCO
E-mail: deljpn.ed@unesco.org

■ Mr Soichi Mori
Director, International Affairs Division,
Minister's Secretariat
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology
E-mail: smori@mext.go.jp

■ Ms Kamoshita Yuko
Office for International Cooperation,
International Affairs Division
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology

■ Dr Mizuno Keiko
Senior Advisor (Education)
Japan International Cooperation Agency
(JICA)

■ Ms Rie Iwasaki
Basic Education Team I, Group I
Human Development Dept., JICA

■ Mr Keiji Ide
Minister of the Embassy of the Embassy of
Japan in Beijing – China

■ Mr Takaaki Iwasa
First Secretary of the Embassy of the
Embassy of Japan in Beijing – China

■ Ms Megumi Inoue
Third Secretary of the Embassy of the
Embassy of Japan in Beijing – China

NORWAY

H. E. Ms Anne Margareth Fagertun
Stenhammer
State Secretary for International
Development
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. juni-plassen/Victoria Terrasse
P.O. Box 8114 Dep. N-0032 Oslo

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Lisbet Rugtvedt
State Secretary, Ministry of Education and
Research

■ Ms Ragne Birte Lund
Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

■ Mr Dankert Vedeler
Deputy Director General, Ministry of
Education and Research

■ Mr Ole Briseid
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Delegation of Norway to
UNESCO
E-mail: dl.noway@unesco.org

■ Mr Olav Seim
Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

■ Mr Kjell-Gunnar Eriksen
Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
E-mail: kge@mfa.no

■ Ms Yngvild Berggrav
Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

■ Ms Eva Kløve
Adviser, Norad (Norwegian Agency for
Development Cooperation)

SWEDEN

■ Ms Gun-Britt Andersson
Ambassador
Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the
OECD and to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis, 75015 Paris – France
Tel: +33 1 45 68 34 51 / 33 6 84 82 4663
Fax: +33 1 43 06 06 48
E-mail: dl.suede@paris.unesco.org /
Gun-Britt.Anderson@ForeignMinistry.Se

Accompanied by:

■ Mrs Ewa Werner Dahlin
Head of Education Division
Dept. for Democracy and Social
Development
Swedish International Development
Agency (SIDA)
E-mail: ewa.Werner-dahlin@sida.se

■ Mr Anders Frankenberg
Education Advisor, SIDA

■ Ms. Janet Vähämäki
Ministry for International Development
Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

■ Mr Kaviraj Appadu
Senior Programme Officer, Education
Division
Dept. for Democracy and Social
Development, SIDA
E-mail: kaviraj.appadu@sida.se

UNITED KINGDOM

■ Mr Gareth Thomas
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department for International
Development (DFID)
1 Palace Street
London SW1E 5HE
Tel: +44 207023 0134
E-mail: g-thomas@dfid.gov.uk

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Desmond Bermingham
Head of Profession, Education

■ Mr Richard Arden,
Education Adviser
E-mail: r-arden@dfid.gov.uk

■ Ms Sally Gear
Gender and Education Adviser
E-mail: s-gear@dfid.gov.uk

■ Ms Bridget Crumpton
Education Adviser, FTI
E-mail: b-crumpton@dfid.gov.uk

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

■ Mr Frederick Schieck
Deputy Administrator
United States Agency for International
Development (USAID)
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523-6800
Tel: +1 202 712 4070

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Sarah Gesiriech
Director of the Office of International
Affairs
U.S. Dept. of Education
E-mail: sarah.gesiriech@ed.gov

■ Ms Amy Ostermeier
US State Dept., Foreign Affairs Office
E-mail: ostermeieraa@state.gov

■ Mr John Grayzel
Director, Office of Education, EGAT
Bureau, USAID
E-mail: jgrayzel@usaid.gov

2. Multilateral Agencies

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

■ Mr Stefano Manservigi
Director General for Development
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels – Belgium

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Marja Karjalainen
Senior Administrator
Unit for Social and Human Development
European Commission
E-mail: Marja.Karjalainen@cec.eu.int

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

■ Mr Changchui He
Assistant Director-General / Regional Representative for Asia & the Pacific
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome – Italy

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Lavinia Gasperini
Senior Education Officer
Education and Communication Service
E-mail: lavinia.gasperini@fao.org

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

■ Mr Kari Tapiola
Executive Director for Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
International Labour Office (ILO)
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22 – Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 799 6324; Fax: +41 22 799 6941
E-mail: tapiola@ilo.org

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Guy Thijs
Director, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

■ Ms Ayse Suse Caglar
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

■ Ms Constance Thomas
Director, ILO Office in Beijing – China

■ Ms Urmila Sarkar
Education Specialist
ILO Office in Bangkok

UNAIDS

■ Mr Prasada Rao
UNAIDS Regional Support Team, Asia and Pacific
Beijing – China

UNPFA

■ Ms Siri Tellier
UNFPA Representative in China, Beijing
1-161 Tayauan Diplomatic office Building
14 Liangmahe Nanlu 16-1, Beijing 100600 – China
Tel: +86 10 6532-6876 / 1360 116 7604
Fax: +86 10 6532-2510
E-mail: tellier@unfpa.org

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Arletty Pinel
Chief, Productive Health Branch
UNFPA, New York
E-mail: pinel@unfpa.org

UNICEF

■ Mr Cream Wright
Global Chief of Education
3 United Nations Plaza, New York
N.Y. 10017 – U.S.A
Tel: +1 212 824 6619; Fax: +1 212 326 7129
E-mail: cwright@unicef.org

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Dina Craissati
Senior Adviser, Education
3 United Nations Plaza, New York
N.Y. 10017 - U.S.A
Tel: 1 212 326 7602; Fax: 1 212 326 7129
E-mail: dcraissati@unicef.org

■ Mr Cliff Mayers
Regional Education Adviser

■ Dr Staneala Beckley
Regional Education Adviser
UNICEF Office for West and Central Africa
Email: sbeckley@unicef.org

■ Ms Changu Mannathoko
Regional Education Adviser
UNICEF ESARO
Email: cmannathoko@unicef.org

■ Ms Brigitte Stark-Merklein
Girls' Education Campaign
Email: bstarkmerklein@unicef.org

■ Ms Susan Durston
Regional Education Adviser

■ Ms Malak Zaalouk
Regional Education Adviser

WORLD BANK

■ Mr Jean-Louis Sarbib
Senior Vice President, Human Development
The World Bank, 1818 H Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20433 – U.S.A
Tel: +1 202 473 4946
E-mail: jsarbib@worldbank.org

Accompanied by:

■ Mercy Tembon
Senior Education Specialist
E-mail: mtembon@worldbank.org

■ Mr Robert Prouty
Lead Education Specialist
E-mail: rprouty@worldbank.org

■ Ms Rosemary Bellew
Lead Education Specialist / Head FTI Secretariat
Email: rbellew@worldbank.org

■ Ms Abby Spring
Communication Officer
FTI Secretariat,
E-mail: aspring@worldbank.org

■ Ms Jee-Peng Tan
Education Advisor, Africa Region
E-mail: jtan@worldbank.org

■ Ms Bashir Sajitha
Senior Education Economist, African Region
The World Bank, Washington D.C.
E-mail: sbashir@worldbank.org

■ Mr Ramamanto Anina Patrick
Senior Education Specialist
E-mail: pramanantoanin@worldbank.org

■ Mr Mehira Palak
Resource Specialist
E-mail: pmehira@worldbank.org

■ Mr Kouassi Soman
Economist
E-mail: ksoman@worldbank.org

■ Ms Triponel Anna
Consultant
E-mail: atriponel@worldbank.org

5. Civil Society

ALFABETIZAÇÃO SOLIDÁRIA (ALFASOL) (BRAZIL)

■ Ms Regina Celia Esteves de Siquiera
National Coordinator / CEO
Rua Pamplona, 1000 5º andar Conj. B
São Paulo CEP 01405-001 – Brazil
Tel: +55 11 3372 4320; Fax: +55 11 3372 4339
E-mail: regina@alfabetizacoa.org.br

ASIAN-SOUTH PACIFIC BUREAU OF ADULT EDUCATION (ASPBAE)

■ Ms. Maria Lourdes Almazan-Khan
Secretary General, ASPBAE
ASPBAE Secretariat c/o MAAPL
9th Floor, Eucharistic Congress Building 3
5 Convent Street, Colaba
Mumbai 400 039 – India
Tel: +91 22 22021391; Fax: +91 22 2283 2217
Email: aspbae@vsnl.com

CENTER FOR UNIVERSAL EDUCATION, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS (USA)

■ Mr Gene Sperling
Director 1779
Massachusetts Avenue N.W. suite 710
Washington DC 20036 – USA
Tel: +1 202 518 3401; Fax: +1 202 986 2984
E-mail: gsperling@cfr.org

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

■ Ms Mary Hatwood Futrell
Founding President
2134 G st, NW, Washington D.C., 20052 – U.S.A.
Tel: +1 202 994 6161; Fax: +1 202 994 8613
E-mail: mfutrell@gwu.edu

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Elie Jouen
Deputy Secretary General
Education International, Brussels – Belgium
E-mail: elie.jouen@ei-ie.org

FONDS NATIONAL POUR L'ÉDUCATION NON FORMELLE (FONAENF)

■ Ms Alice Tiendrebéogo
Directrice generale
11 BP 380, Ouagadougou – Burkina Faso
Tél: +226 50 36 22 13 / 226 76 64 56 76
E-mail: fonaenf@cenatrin.bf

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

■ Mr Kailash Satyarthi
President
Chairperson, Global March Against Child Labour
L-6 Kalkaji, New Delhi 110019 – India
Tel: +91 11 262 248 99 / 26475481
Fax: +91 11 262 368 18
E-mail: kailashsatyarthi@globalmarch.org
Web: www.campaignforeducation.org

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Lucia Fry
Policy Advisor, GCE

■ Dr Sudhanshu Joshi
Executive Director of ICCLC
E-mail: sjoshi@icclc.org

■ Ms Susan Nicolai
Save the Children
E-mail: s.nicolai@savethechildren.org.uk

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND LITERACY (MOROCCO)

■ Mme Najima Rhozali – Thay Thay
Présidente
115, Fondation Hassan II
Harhoura, Temara – Maroc
Tel: +212 373 72 809 / 212 614 80 819
E-mail: najimathaythay@yahoo.fr

6. Others

ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA (ADEA)

■ Mr Mamadou Ndoye
Executive Secretary
7-9 rue Eugene-Delacroix
75116 Paris – France

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

■ Mr Richard Samans
Managing Director
Global Institute for Partnership and Governance
World Economic Forum
91-93 route de la Capite
CH-1223 Cologny – Geneva
Tel: +41 22 869 1414; Fax: +41 22 786 2744
E-mail: richard.samans@weforum.org

7. Observers

ALGERIA

■ Dr Mohamad Gherras
Secrétaire Général
Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
11 Chemin Doudou Mokhtar, Ben-Aknoun – Alger
Tel: +213 12 91 18 23 / 213 21 91 18 88;
Fax: +213 21 91 21 13

BANGLADESH

Mr Ghulam Suhrawarde
NGO

BÉNIN

■ S. E. Mme Karimou Rafiatou
Ministre de l'Enseignement primaire et secondaire
Porto-Novo – République du Bénin

Accompanied by:

■ S.E. Monsieur Yai Olabiyi
Ambassadeur, Délégué Permanent du Bénin auprès de l'UNESCO
Délégation du Bénin
1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15 – France
Tel: +33 1 45 68 3063
Fax: +33 1 43 06 1555
E-mail: o.yai@unesco.org
Mr Jansen Senaida
Consultant, Délégation du Bénin
Maison de l'UNESCO, Paris – France

CAMEROON

■ H. E. Mrs Haman Adama
Minister of Education
Yaoundé
Tel: +237 2231262; Fax: +237 223 0855

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Yacouba Yaya
Director-General of Basic Education

■ Mr Hamidou Komidor
Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of Cameroon
E-mail: hamidou@hotmail.com

■ Mrs Ngatoum Mpiedom Lydie
Technical Adviser
Ministry of Secondary Education
Yaounde

CONGO

■ Madame Rosalie Kama-Niamayoua
Ministre de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire chargé de l'alphabétisation
BP 2078 Brazzaville
Tel: +242 666 5543; Fax : +242 81 25 39

Accompanied by:

■ Mme Ossey Clemence
Directrice general de l'Enseignement
Secondaire

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
THE CONGO

■ Mr Justin Dupar Kampempe
Secrétaire Particulier du Vice-Président
Tel: +243 998 49 7189
E-mail: kampempe@yahoo.fr

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Ka-Bila Mathieu Kalele
Directeur de Cabinet Adjoint du Vice
Président
Université de Kinshasa
E-mail: m_kalele@yahoo.fr

■ Mme Muleta Bella E. Mateleshi
Assistante du Vice-Président
E-mail: vermautesmeralda@yahoo.fr

■ Mme Virginia Musenga Tshiey
Conseillère à l'Éducation
Cabinet du Vice-Président

■ Mr Nlandu Mabula Kinkela
Coordinateur de l'Éducation pour Tous
E-mail: nlandumabula2005@yahoo.fr

■ Mr Manara Kamitenga
Expert en Education
E-mail: kamitenga@yahoo.fr

DJIBOUTI

■ Monsieur Abdi Ibrahim Absieh
Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale et de
l'Enseignement Supérieur
9, Boulevard De Gaulle B.P. 2102
Tel: +253 35 71 36 / 253 35 14 20
Fax: +253 35 42 34 / 253 35 42 34

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Mahdi Mahamoud Tsse
Directeur, Planification
Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale et de
l'Enseignement Supérieur

ETHIOPIA

■ H. E. Dr Sentayehu Wuldemichael
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
P.O. Box 2996, Addis Ababa
Tel: +251 1111 55 29 22
Fax: +251-1111 55 38 55

FINLAND

■ Mr Jussi Karakoski
Education adviser
Dept. for Development Policy
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

P.O. Box 176 (Katajanokanlaituri 3)
FIN-00161 Helsinki
Tel: +358 40 731 7514 / +358-40-731
4514
Fax: +358 9 160 56100
E-mail: jussi.karakoski@formin.fi

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Pekka Puustinen
Director of Unit
Ministry for foreign Affairs
E-mail: pekka.puustinen@formin.fi

GUINEA

■ Son Excellence Monsieur Eugène
CAMARA
Ministre de l'enseignement supérieur et
de la recherche scientifique
B. P. 964, Conakry
Tel: +224 41 19 01/ 224 41 48 94
Fax: +224 41 20 12

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Sylla Senkoun
Chargé d'Affaires, Ambassade de la
Guinée, Beijing – China

■ Mr Sacko Mohamed Lamine
Premier Secrétaire, Ambassade de la
Guinée, Beijing – China
E-mail: molam64@yahoo.fr

ITALY

■ Ms Teresa Savanella
Expert Multilateral Cooperation
Italian Ministry Foreign Affairs
Piazzale della Farnesina 1, 00100 Roma
Tel: +39 06 36915385; Fax: +39 06
3235883
E-mail: teresa.savanella@esteri.it

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Donatella Procesi
Expert Multilateral Cooperation
Italian Ministry Foreign Affairs
E-mail: donatella.procesi@esteri.it

LESOTHO

■ Hon. Mr Mohlabi Kenneth Tsekoa
Minister of Education and Training
Ministry of Education and Training
P.O. Box 47, Maseru 100
Tel: 266 223 17 900 / Fax: +266 223
10206
E-mail: tsekoam@education.gov.ls

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Ntsebe Kokome
Principal Secretary
Ministry of Education and Training
E-mail: kokomen@education.gov.ls

■ Mrs Montseng Mofokeng
Inspector Non-formal Education
Ministry of Education and Training

MAURITANIA

■ Mr Mahfoudh Ould Daby
First counsellor
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of
Mauritania
9, Dong San Jie, San Li Tun
Beijing100600 – China
Tel: +6532 1396 / +6532 1685
Fax: +222 525 28 02
E-mail: cnmesc@mail.mauritania.mr

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Ould Mahfoudh El Houssein
Directeur Promotion Enseignement
Privé

■ Mr Moulaye Ahmed Mohamed Lemine
Directeur, Direction de la Reforme et
Prospective
Ministère de l'Enseignement
Fondamental et Secondaire
E-mail: ml-_moulaye_ahmed@yahoo.fr
The Netherlands
Mr Roland Siebes
Education Advisor
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P.O. Box 20061, 2500 EB The Hague
Tel: +31 70 3404301
E-mail: ronald.siebes@minbuza.nl

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Anne Marjan Kroon
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
E-mail: marjan.kroon@minbuza.nl

■ Ms Rebekka van Roemburg
Basic Education Expert
E-mail: rebekka-van.
roemburg@minbuza.nl

NIGER

■ H.E. Mr Harouna Hamani
Ministre de l'Éducation de base et de
l'Alphabétisation
B.P. 885, Niamey
Tel: +227 722280; Fax: +227 722105

Accompanied by:

■ Monsieur Amadou Tchambou
Chéf unite de suivi du PDDE
Ministère de l'Éducation de Base et de
l'Alphabétisation
E-mail: amadou_tchambou@yahoo.fr /
atchambou@hotmail.com

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

■ H. E. Mr Victor Tvircun
Minister of Education, Youth and Sports
1, Piata Marii Adunari, Nationale 2012,
Chisinau
Tel: +373 22 233 348

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Moldovan Botrinae Viorelie
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Education
E-mail: vick1@mail.md

RWANDA

■ Monsieur Romain Murenzi
Ministre de l'Education, de la Science, de
la Recherche Scientifique
BP 622, Kigali
Tel: +250 583051; Fax: +250 582162
E-mail: info@mineduc.gov.rw

SUDAN

■ H. E. Mr Peter Neyot Kok
Minister of Higher Education and
Scientific Research
P. O. Box 2081, Khartoum
Tel: +249 11 779 312, 249 / 11 774 295
Fax: +249 11 779 312
Email: nyotkok@hotmail.com

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Abdel Aziz Abdel Tif Osaman
Ministry of Education

■ Mr Abdallah Omer
Ministry of Higher Education
Secretariat of the Ministry

■ Mr Nouredin Abdall Gadir
Executive Director, Ministry of Higher
Education

■ Mr Azhari Omar Abdelbagi Mohamed
Director-General, Training Directorate
Ministry of Higher Education and
Scientific Research
E-mail: azharibagi@yahoo.com

■ Mr El Nour Mohamed
Director-General International
Relations
Ministry of Higher Education
E-mail: mmanour@uofk.edu

■ Mr Magzoub Elsheikh
Ministry of Higher Education

TCHAD

■ Monsieur Avocksouma Djona
Atchenemou
Ministre d'Etat
Ministre de l'Education Nationale, de la
Jeunesse et des Sports

B.P. 1117, Ndjamena
Tel: +235 51 6158; Fax: +235 51 7624
E-mail: djonaav@yahoo.fr

Accompanied by:

■ Monsieur Michrel Doromon
Secrétaire Général
Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de l'Education
Nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports

TIMOR-LESTE

■ Ms Rosaria Corte-Real
Vice-Minister

Ministry for Education, Culture, Youth
Affairs and Sports
Rua de Vila Verde, Dili
Tel: +670 333-9631; Fax: +670 332-2033

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Mateus dos Reis
Director, Primary Education,

Mr Miguel Maia dos Stantos
Dean, Faculty of Education-UNTC

TUNISIA

■ Monsieur Néjib Ayad
Directeur Général du Centre National
Pédagogique et de Recherche
Educationnelle de la République
Tunisienne
130, Bd 9 avril 1938 - 1006 Tunis
Tel: +216-71 56 7327
E-mail: Nejib.Ayed@minedu.edunet.tn

■ United Republic of Tanzania
Hon. Joseph J. Mungai
Minister of Education and Culture
P.O. Box 9121, Dar Es Salaam
Tel: +255 744 666111; Fax: +255 22
2113271
E-mail: jjmungai@comcast.net

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Amos G. Mwakalinga Amos
Director for Policy and Planning

■ Mr Mhwela Kalinga
Personal Assistant to Minister

VIET NAM

■ Mr Nguyen Ngoc Hung
Deputy Director
International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Education and Training,
Hanoi Tel: +84 4 868 4273; Fax: + 84 4
869 3243
Email: nnhung@moet.edu.vn

Accompanied by:

■ Mr Nguyen Quoc Chi
Technical Advisor
National EFA Coordination Unit for the
Implementation of the EFA Action Plan
Ministry of Education and Training

COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARIAT

■ Ms Ann Keeling
Director, Social Transformation
Programmes Division
E-mail: a.keeling@commonwealth.int

Accompanied by:

■ Dr Henry Kaluba
Head, Education Section

■ Dr Jyotsna Jha
Adviser, Gender and Education

■ Ms Fatimah Kelleher
Programme Officer, Education

GLOBAL AIDS ALLIANCE

■ Dr Paul Zeitz
Executive Director, Global Aids Alliance
1413 K Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005, USA
Tel: +202 789 0432, Ext. 210
E-mail: pzeitz@globalaidsalliance.org

SAVE THE CHILDREN UK

■ Ms Susan Nicolai
Education Advisor

UNICEF

■ Ms Patricia Moccia
Chief, Editorial and Publication Section
UNICEF New York
Tel: +1 212 326 7286
E-mail: pmoccia@unicef.org

Accompanied by:

■ Ms Pat Engle
Chief, Early Childhood Development,
UNICEF, HQ

■ Ms Ingalill Colbro
Senior Programme Funding Officer,
UNICEF, HQ

■ Ms Sabah Knani
Senior Project Officer, UNGEI, UNICEF,
HQ

■ Mr Friedrich Huebler
Assistant Project Officer, DPP, UNICEF,
HQ

■ Ms Brigitte Stark-Merklein
Girls Education Campaigns, DOC
UNICEF, HQ

■ Ms Maida Pasic
Assistant Project Officer, Education
UNICEF, HQ

■ Ms Gertrude Kitaburaza
Project Assistant, UNGEI Secretariat
UNICEF, HQ

■ Ms Vigdis Cristofoli
Regional Education Project Officer,
UNGEI Focal Point

■ Mr Christian Voumard
Representative, UNICEF, China

■ Ms Anjana Mangalagiri
Programme Officer, Education Section,
UNICEF, China

■ Mr Guo Xiaoping
National Project Officer, Education,
UNICEF, China

■ Ms Annette Nyquist
Assistant Programme, Officer Education,
UNICEF, China

■ Ms Imhof Katrin
Head of Education Section, UNICEF
Thailand

■ Dr Malak Zaalouk
UNICEF Regional Adviser for the MENA
Region

■ Mr Malli Kamimura
Web Coordinator, UNICEF, New York

UNIVERSALIA
MANAGEMENT GROUP
LIMITED
Ms Maroushka Kanywani
Universal Management Group Limited
5252 de Maisonneuve Blvd West
H4A 3S5, Montreal, Canada
Tel: +514 485 3565, ext. 242; Fax +514
485 3210
E-mail: mkanywani@universalia.com

7. UNESCO

■ Mr Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General

■ Mr Peter Smith
Assistant Director-General for Education

■ Mr Abhimanyu Singh
Director, Division of International
Coordination and Monitoring for
Education for All (ED/EFA)

Coordination Team: ED/EFA/CT

■ Ms Khawla Shaheen, Senior
Programme Specialist

■ Mr Hilaire Mputu Afasuka,
Programme Specialist

■ Ms Sabine Detzel, Programme
Specialist

■ Mr Norihiko Shimizu, Programme
Specialist

■ Ms Mary Konin, Senior Secretary
Ms Maimouna Niang, Secretary

Monitoring Report Team: ED/EFA/MRT

■ Mr Nicholas Burnett, Director

■ Ms Maroushka Kanywani, Consultant
from Universalia

UNESCO Conference Services

■ Mr Mohamed Salah El Din
Conference Section, ADM/CLD/C

■ Ms Chantal Bret
Chief Interpreter, ADM/CLD/I

Headquarters

■ Mr Hans d'Orville
Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning,
BSP

■ Mr. Qian Tang
Deputy Assistant Director-General for
Education, ED/DADG

■ Mr George Haddad
Director, Division of Higher Education
ED/HED

■ Ms Ann Therese Ndong Jatta
Director, Division of Basic Education,
ED/BAS

■ Mr Mark Richmond
Senior Executive Officer, Office of the
Director-General, ODG/RED

■ Ms Amita Vohra
Executive Officer, ODG

■ Mr Anthony Krause
French Translator, Office of the Director-
General, ODG/UC

■ Ms Emiko De Marmier-Murai
Chief of Section, ERC/RMS/APA

■ Ms Lene Buchert
Chief, Section for Primary Education
Division of Basic Education, ED/BAS

■ Mr Shigeru Aoyagi
Chief, Literacy and Non-formal
Education Unit
Division of Basic Education, ED/BAS/LIT

■ Ms Susan Williams
Chief of Section, Editorial Section
(Communication/Publicity) BPI/PRS

Rapporteurs

■ Mr Clinton Robinson
Senior Programme Specialist, ED/EFA/CT

■ Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux
Senior Programme Planning Officer

Division of Programme Planning, Monitoring and Reporting, BSP/PMR

■ Ms Cynthia Guttman
Programme Specialist, ED/EFA/MRT

■ Ms Elizabeth Fordham
Consultant, ED/EFA/CT

UNESCO Institutes

■ Mr Adama Ouane
Director, UNESCO Institute for
Education, UIE Hamburg

■ Mr Michael Millward
Director a.i., UNESCO Institute for
Statistics, UIS Montreal

■ Ms Alison Kennedy
Head of Section, Education, UIS
Montreal

■ Mr Ko-Chin Tung
Asia and Pacific Regional Adviser, UIS
Montreal

Field Offices

- Mr Sheldon Shaeffer
Director, UNESCO Bangkok Office
- Mr Yasuyuki Aoshima
Director, UNESCO Beijing Office
- Ms Satoko Yano
Assistant Programme Specialist,
UNESCO Beijing Office
- Ms Lei Sun
National Project Officer, UNESCO Beijing
Office
- Ms Li Jiangping,
Secretary to Director, Beijing Office
- Ms Lucille Gregorio
Senior Education Consultant, UNESCO
Beijing
- Ms Pei Hongye
Culture Programme Assistant, UNESCO
Beijing
- Mr Benoit Sossu
Head Officer, UNESCO Maputo

Interpreters

- Ms Antoinette Bordelet
- Ms Bolanle Ogedengbe
- Ms Chantal Corajoud
- Ms Christine Marteau
- Ms Francisca Truel de Barron
- Ms Geneviève Leibrich
- Ms Isabel Zamora
- Ms Maria Aguilera
- Mr Marc Viscovi
- Ms Marysol Tellier
- Ms Bdlá Ogedemgbe
- Ms Wang Xuezheng
- Mr Xu Jianying
- Mr Feng J. Jingbao
- Mr Shi Limin

IV. Programme of the Meeting

Mandate of the High-Level Group

The Dakar Framework for Action (§19) states that: '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 (...) it will also provide 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'.

Expected outcomes

- To take forward the promises of 2005 into concrete commitment and actions in favour of EFA;
- To adopt and implement policies on adult literacy for achieving Dakar Goals 3 and 4, and to provide additional donor support for effective literacy programmes;
- To stimulate fresh commitments for promoting and expanding education for rural people;
- To re-position the international community to meet the missed 2005 target of gender parity for primary and secondary education;
- To reach broad agreement on UNESCO's Joint Action Plan and its implementation by all concerned partners;
- To agree on a strategy on channelling enhanced commitments of aid and debt relief for EFA.

Monday, 28 November 2005

- From 9.00 am: *Registration at Beijing Hotel*
- 10.30 am: **Opening ceremony**
Chairperson:
• Zhou Ji, Minister of Education, People's Republic of China
Opening speech:
• Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister, People's Republic of China
Welcome address:
• Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO
Keynote addresses:
Investing in Literacy: Mongolia's experience
• Nambaryn Enkhbayar, President of Mongolia
Literacy and Empowerment: Lessons from Thailand
• Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Crown Princess of Thailand
Literacy and the MDGs: An African perspective
• Arthur Zahidi N'Goma, Vice-President, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 12 – 1.30 pm: **Luncheon**
Hosted by Mr. Zhang Xinsheng, Chairman of the Chinese National Commission
- Evening *Reception*

Tuesday, 29 November 2005

Working Session: I

9 – 11 am:

Review of progress towards the EFA goals: can these be achieved without stronger commitment to literacy and gender equality?

Chair:

- Moustapha Sourang, Minister of Education, Senegal

Lead commentary:

- Nicholas Burnett, Director, EFA Global Monitoring Report

Panellists:

- Luis Gómez Gutiérrez, Minister of Education, Cuba
- George I. Godia Education Secretary, Kenya
- Zhang Xinsheng, Vice Minister of Education, People's Republic of China
- Maria Lourdes Almazan-Khan, Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions

(Peter Smith, ADG for Education, UNESCO)

Based on the analysis of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006* of progress towards all six EFA goals, the Session will aim at strengthening EFA partners' commitment to the full EFA agenda, with particular attention to gender equality and literacy goals. To achieve the Dakar Goal 4 on literacy, a framework for international action, backed by concerted action at national level – as called for by UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) – is necessary. This also implies commitment of additional funds from donors. It is evident that the literacy goal will not be achieved unless appropriate educational opportunities are provided to millions of children who have no access to school. Since girls constitute the majority of these out-of-school children, there is a need for re-positioning the international community to meet the missed 2005 gender parity goal for primary and secondary education.

Working Session: II

11 am – 1 pm:

Reaching the marginalized: investing in education for rural people to achieve EFA goals and the MDGs

Chair:

- Zhou Ji, Minister of Education, People's Republic of China

Lead commentary:

- Mamadou Ndoeye, Executive Secretary, ADEA

Panellists:

- Changchui He, Assistant Director-General for Asia and the Pacific, FAO
- Chaturon Chaisang, Minister of Education, Thailand
- Reyes Tamez Guerra, Minister of Education, Mexico
- Mary Futrell, Founding President, Education International

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions (Lead Commentator)

Educating rural people is one of the principal challenges for the equitable achievement of the EFA objectives and the MDGs. With less than 50 per cent of children in school, marked gender inequality and a shortage of qualified teachers, rural areas are the furthest away from achieving EFA. In fact, rural people are the most likely to suffer from hunger, malnutrition, disease (including HIV/AIDS) and low life expectancy. Thus, the Education for Rural People (ERP) initiative

contributes to national sustainable development through increased agricultural productivity, food security and poverty reduction. Building on the findings of the sixth EFA Working Group Meeting, the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006*, the recent Ministerial Seminar on ERP in Addis Ababa and the 2005 World Summit, this Session will aim at identifying strategies, resources and actions for ensuring that the education needs of rural people are adequately addressed by intersectoral multidisciplinary partnership efforts.

1– 2.45 p.m.: *Lunch*

Working Session: III

3 – 5 pm: Strengthening partnerships through the Joint Action Plan

Chair:

- Ahmed Gamal Eddin Musa, Minister of Education, Egypt

Lead commentary:

- Peter Smith, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

Panellists:

- Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education, South Africa
- Henry Jeffrey, Minister of Education, Guyana
- Mitoji Yabunaka, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan
- Anne Margareth F. Stenhammer, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions (Lead Commentator)

As requested by UNESCO's Executive Board, the Joint Action Plan for Achieving EFA by 2015 seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the roles of EFA stakeholders and a coherent strategy of how they can work together more efficiently to achieve the Dakar goals. UNESCO's EFA Strategy, including its three initiatives – LIFE, Education for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Teacher Training in sub-Saharan Africa – should be considered as an integral part of the Joint Action Plan. Building on knowledge and experience as well as the global mapping of partners' roles and responsibilities, the Joint Action Plan will help in improving EFA effectiveness at national level, through efficient coordination, capacity-building, adequate financial support and mutual accountability. This Session will aim at reaching a broad agreement on the Joint Action Plan and on promoting its implementation by all concerned partners.

Working Session: IVa

5 – 6.30 pm: Resource mobilization and aid effectiveness: translating EFA commitments into reality

Chair:

- Pierre-Andre Wiltzer, envoyé spécial du Gouvernement français

Lead commentary:

Stefano Manservigi, Director-General for Development, EC

Panellists:

- Chinwa Nora Obaji, Minister of Education, Nigeria
- Osman Farruk, Minister of Education, Bangladesh
- Richard Samans, Managing Director, Global Institute for Partnership and Governance, World Economic Forum

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions (Lead Commentator)

Despite the recent encouraging upward trend in international aid for basic education, the financial gap to meet the EFA

goals by 2015 remains considerable. The Group should critically review the capacities of governments and international organizations to increase their investments and support in order to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals, in light of the FTI experience. Recognizing that increased funding for EFA will only make a difference if it is strategically targeted and efficiently used, the Group should reach agreement on specific actions to promote the mobilization and effective use of domestic resources and improve aid effectiveness, particularly through donor coordination and harmonization. Specific recommendations will be directed to the FTI Partnership meeting. Measures to assist the non-FTI countries in greatest need and/or at serious risk of missing the EFA goals will be discussed. This session will also address issues related to the implications of the FTI for the funding of other EFA goals, namely, ECCE and literacy, and make suggestions on how to expand and improve FTI. Issues of debt relief and/or debt swaps for education will be debated in the light of recent moves in this direction.

7 pm: *Reception*

Wednesday, 30 November 2005

Working Session: IVb

9 – 10.30 am: *Resource mobilization and aid effectiveness: taking stock of FTI experience*

Chair:

- Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

Lead commentary:

- Richard Cameron, Senior Vice President, CIDA, Canada
(Measuring donor effectiveness: Donor indicative Framework)

Panellists:

- Javed Ashraf Oazi, Minister of Education, Pakistan
- Frederick Schieck, Deputy-Administrator, USAID
- Aires Bonifacio Ali, Minister of Education and Culture, Mozambique
- Kailash Satyarthi, Chair, Global Campaign for Education

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions (Lead Commentator)

The Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) serves as a mechanism for mobilizing resources, and harmonizing donor support and aligning it with country education strategies. As it moves these processes to country level, national leadership in coordinating donor efforts around a holistic education sector plan is a key factor and will provide the framework for FTI support. This session will enable participants to draw lessons from FTI experience thus far and situate the current status of the initiative in the broader EFA framework. The outcome of this session will serve as input into the FTI Partnership Meeting, which follows the High-Level Group.

Working Session V:

10.30 am – 1 pm: *The way ahead*

10.30 – 11.30 am: *Agreement on the way forward*

Chairperson:

- Peter Smith, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

12.30 – 12.45: *Adoption of the Communiqué*

Chairperson:

Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

12.45 – 1.00: Concluding remarks

Chairperson:

Zhou Ji, Minister of Education, People's Republic of China

The Sixth Meeting of EFA Working Group recommended that Beijing High-Level Group make a determined commitment to education that would establish EFA as a priority issue at all political levels. The High-Level Group needs both to highlight what has been achieved since Dakar and to focus on how, over the coming decade, EFA partners can work together to make EFA a tangible reality. This session aims at reaching agreement on critical next steps for implementation by the different partners before the next meeting of the High-Level Group. These will be reflected in the Communiqué. Agreement should also be reached on the preparation of a comprehensive review of progress since Dakar, to be undertaken in 2007-2008, as well as on a joint approach to follow up the recommendations of the Group at international, regional and national levels.

1 – 1.30 pm: *Media briefing*

1.30 – 2.30 pm: *Lunch*

7 pm: *Reception*

Notes:

- The meeting will be co-chaired by the Director-General of UNESCO and the Minister of Education, People's Republic of China.
- The Opening Ceremony will take place in the Great Hall of the People's Congress on 28 November at 10:30 a.m. and will be public. Participants are advised to take their seats by 9:30 a.m. Official transport will be provided from the Beijing Hotel at 9 a.m.
- Business Sessions of HLG at the Beijing Hotel on 29-30 November are strictly restricted to participants.
- Each of the working sessions will be introduced by the Chair of the session. The lead commentator will outline in 15 minutes the most critical issues for discussion. This will be followed by a 5 minute intervention from each designated panellist on specific issues emerging from the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006. The role of the lead commentator will be to lead the session towards specific recommendations for actions. He/she will highlight major points, recommendations and actions in 5 minutes at the end of each session. The summaries will form the basis for reaching consensus on the way forward in Working Session V.
- Tea/Coffee will be available to participants, but there will be no breaks.
- A drafting group ('sherpas') will prepare the High-Level Group Communiqué before and during the High-Level Group meeting. The meetings are scheduled for 27/28 November in the evening, end of Session IV on Tuesday and over breakfast on Wednesday (30 November).
- A Press Conference will follow conclusion of High-Level Group meeting.
- The High-Level Group Secretariat will be at the meeting venue from Friday 25 November 2005. All correspondence including personal mail should be addressed as follows:

Postal Address:

Secretary-General, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

37 Damucang Hutong, Xidan 100086

Beijing, China.

Tel: (86-10)-6609-6883 / : (86-10)-6513-7766 (Operation, Beijing Hotel)

Fax: (86-10)-6601-7912

e-mail: efa5@moe.edu.cn

Website: <http://efa.unesco.org.cn>

V. List of side events

Dates	Event	Convener(s)	Contact
26-27 November	UNGEI Technical and Global Advisory Committee meetings	UNICEF	Mr Cream Wright, UNICEF cwright@unicef.org
27 November	Sino-African Forum of Education Ministers	People's Republic of China	National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO natcomcn@public3.bta.net.cn
28 November (pm)	Third Roundtable on EFA and Elimination of Child Labour and EFA	ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and Global March against Child Labour	Ayşe Sule Caglar, ILO caglar@ilo.org
30 Nov. (pm) – 2 December (am)	EFA-FTI Annual Partnership meeting	FTI Co-chairs	Ms Rosemary Bellew World Bank rbellew@worldbank.org
2 December 2005 (pm)	EFA-FTI Side meetings (Catalytic Fund and EPDF Strategy Committee Meetings)	FTI Secretariat	Ms Rosemary Bellew World Bank rbellew@worldbank.org
3 December 2005 (am)	FTI Steering Committee	FTI Co-chairs	Ms Rosemary Bellew World Bank rbellew@worldbank.org

VI. List of acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
CIEFFA	International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa
E-9	Nine high-population countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan
EFA	Education for All
EDUCAIDS	Global Initiative on HIV & AIDS and Education
ERP	Education for Rural People
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
G8	Group of eight of the world's leading industrialized nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GDP	Gross domestic product
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IFF	International Finance Facility
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TTISSA	Teacher Training Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa
UNDAF	United Nations' Development Assistance Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UPE	Universal primary education
UPC	Universal primary completion

REPORT 2005

High-Level Group on Education for All Fifth Meeting

Beijing, People's
Republic of China
28-30 November 2005



The fifth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA) met in Beijing, China, from 28 to 30 November 2005. Convened annually by the Director-General of UNESCO, the High-Level Group serves as a 'level for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization' in EFA. This year, the High-Level Group brought together more than 360 participants, including representatives from developing countries, bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, civil society and the private sector.

Drawing on the findings of the 2006 *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, the High-Level Group focused on the follow issues:

- ▶ Enhancing commitment to literacy and gender equality
- ▶ Investing in education for rural people
- ▶ Strengthening partnerships through the EFA Global Action Plan
- ▶ Translating EFA aid commitments into reality
- ▶ Taking stock of FTI experience and progress in aid effectiveness

The High-Level Group issued a communiqué expressing its clear determination to accelerate progress in EFA through more coordinated action and closer alignment with individual country needs.