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Organisation
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

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Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All

16-18 December 2008

Oslo, Norway

Summary Report

Introduction

The Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA) was held from 16 to 18 December 2008 in Oslo, Norway; it was co-hosted by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO, and Mr Erik Solheim, Norwegian Minister of the Environment and International Development. Preceded and followed by technical meetings, the Ministerial session was held on 17 December and was divided into three plenary sessions centred on exploring ways to strengthen governance and commitment to equity, addressing challenges in the processes of recruiting and rewarding teachers, and identifying opportunities to ensure financing of EFA. Additionally, a working lunch session examined girls' education in the context of gender equality and development.

Each plenary session was moderated by two co-chairs (an education minister and a representative of an EFA convening agency) who introduced the topic, followed by a number of discussants who presented specific views and experiences. Subsequently, the floor was opened for a general discussion in which all those present could participate. All Ministers and Vice-Ministers present, as well as high-level officials from key international organizations, actively participated in the High-Level Group sessions as discussants or co-chairs. The annexed agenda provides a comprehensive list of the co-chairs and discussants.

The High-Level Group discussions proved successful in identifying actions that require follow-up, and for placing education at the centre of development. Several themes were recurrent in the discussion, including the need to respect national ownership and cultural contexts, emphasize bottom-up approaches, and address management and quality enhancement issues holistically.

Opening Ceremony – 16 December 2008

Organized by the Government of Norway, the combined political and cultural elements of this High-Level Group meeting's opening ceremony were warmly received by all participants. Opened by welcome addresses from Mr Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway, and Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, the ceremony included interventions from H. M. Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, H. R. H Crown Prince Haakon, Norway, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Goodwill Ambassador and Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal. In addition, a video message from Mr Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General was shown. Cultural components included performances by Ms Sissel Kyrkjebø, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Goodwill Ambassador, and several moving scenes from the opera *Jenny*, performed by a mix of professionals and students from Dissimilis, an organization working with people with Down's syndrome. A short video was shown depicting a recent mission undertaken to Madagascar by the Norwegian Minister of the Environment and International Development, accompanied by a group of Norwegian students. During the film, and the subsequent question and answer period, the students highlighted their perspectives on the similarities and differences between their education system and that of Madagascar.

Subsequently, a panel discussion focused on the theme 'Meeting the Global Challenges: Education as a Driver for Change', included a number of high-level participants representing Governments (Norway and South Africa), the EFA convening agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. Moderated by Ms Eva Bratholm, Director, Information and Public Affairs Department, Norwegian Agency for Development

Cooperations (NORAD), the seven participants concentrated on evidence illustrating the benefits of education. “Investing in early childhood care and development programmes increases earning potential by 17 per cent to 40 per cent, and each additional year of schooling by 15 per cent. These are the compelling arguments we can make,” said Ms Joy Phumaphi, Vice-President of the World Bank. With 40 million more children in primary school than there were in 2000, participants stressed that gains had to be maintained, despite the current economic climate. Studies show that each additional percentage point loss in growth pushes 20 million more people into poverty. “As the financial crisis hits, the pressure on poor families will be much greater,” said Mr Nicholas Burnett, UNESCO’s Assistant Director-General for Education. “It is really important that spending be maintained to help poor families to keep their children in school.” Norway’s Crown Prince Haakon urged those in attendance not to use the financial crisis as a pretext for cuts in social sector spending, pointing out that his country spends 1 per cent of gross national income on development aid and that education is among priority fields. Mr Craig Barrett, Chairman of Intel Corporation, echoed this, stating that “You can only invest your way out of a recession”.

Several panellists stressed that pressure has to be kept on governments. South Africa’s Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, described how media and civil society organizations can hold governments to account by monitoring actions more carefully. The benefit of educating girls was another compelling argument during the discussion and Mr Greg Mortenson, co-author of *Three Cups of Tea* and executive director of the Central Asia Institute (CAI), described how, in his experience opening more than 70 schools in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, unless girls are educated and empowered, a society will not be able to change.

The need to emphasize innovation and technology on a larger scale than ever before was stressed, particularly in the context of strategies aimed at filling the teacher shortage and improving the status of the profession. Several examples of innovative practices were cited, such as fast-tracking unemployed graduates in sub-Saharan Africa into short teacher-training courses and a programme in Norway that gives teacher-training scholarships to students who go on to teach in remote rural areas for four to six years. For Mr Barrett, whose company has helped to train 6 million teachers around the world, “simple technologies can do wonders. “A simple television set and DVD can supplement teaching in the local language,” he said.

The panel discussion ended by all participants reiterating that these EFA goals are not unattainable and that governments have concrete choices, such as whether or not to cut their basic education budgets. “We need to focus on equity and to go to scale,” said Mr Burnett. “The US\$7 billion annual gap in aid for basic education is not large compared with other amounts being spent these days to overcome the financial crisis.”

Ministerial Meeting – Wednesday, 17 December 2008

Plenary Discussion I

Education for All: Strengthening Governance and the Commitment to Equity

The first plenary discussion of the High-Level Group meeting was focused on exploring the best way forward for reducing inequalities in education and ensuring all youth, adults and children benefit from quality education. It was agreed that urgent attention must be paid to understanding how best to increase employment, bail out the financial sector and revitalize the economy, and that education is a fundamental—and critical—step towards achieving this. Mr Kevin Watkins, Director, The Global Monitoring Report, presented key messages and findings from the *2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report: Overcoming Inequality: Why Governance Matters*. The presentation, annexed at the end of this summary, focused on the vast disparities in education based on wealth, gender, location, language and other markers. It also examined aid governance, and challenged countries to maintain and increase investments and effort in order to build upon the achievements made since 2000 and address the remaining obstacles. Much of Mr Watkins' presentation, as well as the subsequent interventions by participants, noted that concentrating on reforming poor governance and improving the quality of education requires further exploration of decentralization, reinforcement of accountability at global and national levels, devolving authority and decision-making at the school level, increasing autonomy of communities, expanding choice and competition, establishing more flexible approaches to recruitment and effective allocation of aid, to name a few. The following actions were particularly emphasized:

- Research on the multitude of disadvantages that exacerbate key issues of equity and their impact
- Reinforcing linkages between the EFA and the MDG goals and other social policies, addressing them holistically as well as vertically and horizontally
- Transforming education into knowledge
- Assessment of the most marginalized populations and the cost it will take to integrate them into education systems
- Collaborative partnerships (intersectoral, interregional, intercontinental)
- Addressing the global divide in opportunities to education and eliminating disparities based on economic, political and social indicators
- Ensuring that sufficient attention is paid by governments to illiteracy and teacher shortages
- Establishing links between education planning and poverty reduction strategy policies and pro-poor strategies
- Developing monitoring and implementation assessment mechanisms
- Greater emphasis on long-term planning, beyond primary education

Ministerial Lunch

Theme: Girls' education as a driver for gender equality and development

A luncheon for Ministers was hosted by Mr Erik Solheim to ensure focus on gender issues in education during the discussions of the High-Level Group meeting. Investment in girls' education as the most beneficial economic investment was stated by several participants and much discussion ensued on how best to expand access and retain females in primary and

secondary school. Understanding cultural contexts and improving health infrastructures were cited as the most important foundations to advancing gender parity. It was also acknowledged that in times of crisis, women and girls are disproportionately affected; thus, participants urged governments and donors not to waiver on education during the current global financial downturn.

Plenary Discussion II

Recruiting and Rewarding Teachers

Filling the teacher gap is a complex issue involving recruitment, deployment, training and status, among others. Research indicates that an estimated 18 million new teachers will be needed to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015 (and thus much greater numbers if we include secondary, tertiary and vocational schools). Currently, only approximately 17 per cent of total aid to education is allocated for teachers.

The discussion during this session went beyond simply recruiting and rewarding teachers: it examined ways of improving the status of the teaching profession as well as general school-based management issues. It was often noted that incentives for female teachers will significantly impact the goal of gender parity as well as encourage adult literacy, particularly in poor countries. One participant cited the following proverb 'It is better to have a good teacher under a tree than a bad one in a classroom or none at all.' During the discussion, the following statements were often heard:

- Re-evaluate the role and function of the teacher
- First-rate education will not be obtained from teachers with third-rate salaries
- Identify accountability measures to encourage self-motivation of teachers (based on number of children in school, exam grades, etc.)
- Encourage innovative research work that provides school administrators the right skills
- Focus on alternative methodology and curricula, with greater emphasis on career support, technical training, etc, to attract teachers and students and retain them in the system (addressing brain drain aspect)

It was agreed that a Task Force on teachers be developed in order to coordinate ongoing teacher-training initiatives and avoid overlapping activities, particularly at the regional level. A number of participants including the European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, United States of America and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), expressed initial interest in supporting this group's efforts, through providing financial backing and/or technical experts.

Plenary Discussion III

Financing EFA: Respecting the Compact

High standards of education require high levels of financing and political commitment. It was apparent to all participants that the international financial crisis should not be a pretext to cut funds to education but rather a reason for investing and further building on the gains thus far attained. The first step towards achieving this will be to strategically highlight the achievements of the past eight years, in order to convince those outside the education sector that education spending is justified and to encourage funding increases from national

governments and donors alike. It is the responsibility of the international community to ensure that lower-income countries remain the priority, notably those in Africa and South and West Asia, a point which has also been emphasized in other outcome documents from international meetings such as the G8 and the European Union EU Agenda for Action on MDGs. The US\$1 billion expected annual financing gap of the FTI-Catalytic Fund over the next two years was acknowledged and countries were urged to look into refinancing the Catalytic Fund to ensure its effectiveness. Other recommendations included:

- Increasing coordination among international donors (countries, civil society, private sector, etc.)
- Establishing monitoring systems to follow disbursement processes
- Adhering to the Accra Agenda for Action and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and ensuring the long-term predictability of aid, in accordance with national priorities and needs
- Increasing aid for education in emergencies, especially through humanitarian policies and strategies

Cross-cutting issues

Quantitative achievements of the past years are now giving way to a renewed focus on reaching those that remain marginalized, in particular as 30 million children are projected to still be out-of-school in 2015. Within all the internationally agreed MDGs and the EFA goals, several cross-cutting themes are of particular importance to this regard, including gender, learning outcomes, protection of children, etc. The following suggestions were raised during the High-Level Group discussions:

- Further examining reasons why children are entering into child labour rather than attending school. Is this due to a lack of resources, do they not see the value of education in their communities, or is it other reasons?
- Establishing programmes that protect children and strengthen efforts to provide broader access to learning opportunities
- Promoting appropriate school culture environments
- Disseminating advocacy for all education goals
- Placing greater attention to gender issues for students and teachers, particularly in rural areas and countries facing conditions of fragility

Oslo Declaration

Following these plenary discussions, a session devoted to the discussion and adoption of the Oslo Declaration was presided over by Mr Matsuura and Mr Solheim. Building upon the drafting session of the declaration (16 December technical session) and incorporating the afore-mentioned discussions, the Oslo Declaration (annexed) was unanimously adopted by the High-Level Group participants. Among other items, the Declaration draws particular attention to the necessity of strengthening governance and commitment to equity, recruiting and rewarding teachers, and effectively financing Education for All. In particular, the Declaration urges development partners to increase official development assistance and to give priority to investment in basic education.

Technical Follow-up Meeting -- Thursday 18 December 2008

The follow-up meeting to the adoption of the Oslo Declaration was held on Thursday 18 December 2008. The objective of this technical meeting was to propose and identify concrete actions and activities to be implemented in 2009 and beyond, in accordance with the specific action points in the Oslo Declaration.

The meeting was co-chaired by UNESCO and Norway, and divided into four parts in order to address the four key issues of the High-Level Group ministerial meeting, namely teachers, the centrality of education for development, equity and governance, and financing.

1. Teachers

Mr Burnett began by emphasizing that the Task Force on teachers aims to coordinate ongoing teacher-training initiatives and eliminate duplicative activities, particularly at the regional level.

Norway, the European Commission, Germany and the United Kingdom committed themselves to providing financial support to the Task Force. France, Japan and the United States of America also expressed interest in supporting the activities of the Task Force, but would need to consult with their respective governments prior to engaging in specific commitments.

Mr Burnett welcomed the proposal that UNESCO host a small Secretariat of the Task Force, insisting on the importance of involving as many interested partners as possible, including countries that did not participate in the 2008 High-Level Group meeting. In this role, UNESCO will begin to organize the first meeting of the Task Force, scheduled for late February or early March 2009. The International Labour Organization volunteered to support UNESCO to this end.

Regarding the function of the Task Force/Secretariat, Norway referred to the arrangement for the Global Monitoring Report team as an efficient 'semi-independent' body and suggested that interested partners should comment on draft proposals via electronic interaction.

During the discussion, a number of principles and possible activities were raised for consideration by the Task Force:

- Transparent, open and inclusive process in terms of membership and contribution
- Coordination of regional initiatives
- Strong participation of countries from the South
- Dissemination of good practices
- Cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
- Creative and innovative activities

It was also suggested that the Task Force explore the possibility of addressing the following issues: school management, gender balance, financing and professionalization of teachers, mother-tongue education and post-primary teachers.

Regarding development of the Task Force, participants agreed on the following next steps:

- Develop the terms of reference of the Task Force

- Discuss technical and financial support from willing partners
- Create a Secretariat, to be housed at UNESCO
- Launch a mapping exercise of existing teacher initiatives
- Explore potential linkages with ongoing teacher initiatives (e.g. UNESCO's Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Saharan Africa - TTISSA)
- Identify and agree on time-bound actions on the basis of the Action Plan

2. The centrality of education for development

2.1 Global advocacy efforts

Mr Steven Obeegadoo, Director, Country Relations, EFA International Coordination Team, UNESCO, introduced this issue, drawing attention to the global advocacy efforts for all six EFA goals outlined in the Oslo Declaration. To achieve this, better mapping, planning and coordination of EFA partners' activities is necessary. He cited certain activities to begin this work, including the development of a calendar of relevant international events, creation of a joint resource base and development of joint advocacy efforts.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) welcomed the idea of a collective and more active engagement in the 'Class of 2015', in order to continue advocacy and awareness-raising efforts at the highest levels. This initiative consists of broad commitments by EFA partners to mobilize their institution/country in order to promote EFA and continue to advance towards achieving the goals. GCE stressed that a mapping of potential actors to help achieve these advocacy objectives would be fundamental to 'global advocacy efforts' and asked for further details on the joint resource base mentioned previously.

Attention was drawn to the critical lack of resources within the EFA Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) and it was emphasized that the global advocacy efforts a EFA should be linked to efforts at FTI replenishment. In addition, a suggestion was made for the Global Monitoring Report team to put together a fact sheet on the overall financing situation, addressing questions related to what individual countries are putting forth and further resources that are needed.

At the end of the discussion, Mr Burnett reaffirmed the importance of monitoring the impact of the financial crisis on EFA. Regarding the share of responsibilities between the convening agencies, he proposed that UNESCO take the lead on outlining these.

Next steps

- Develop a calendar of international education-related events, including other relevant development sectors
- Create a joint resource base
- EFA convening agencies to develop joint advocacy efforts through a joint EFA advocacy plan of action

2.2 Intersectoral approach

Paragraph 6 of the Oslo Declaration was then examined, and Mr Obeegadoo explained its objective of bringing together all those who are committed to 'better coordinate education, health and nutrition initiatives' in favour of young children. As acknowledged by Mr

Burnett, many initiatives already exist in these areas, but the challenge of streamlining activities and avoiding duplication of efforts remains.

Although EFA partners are aware of and confident in the significant returns from investing in early childhood care and education, as these benefits are long-term, several countries continue to express difficulties in perceiving them. The World Bank thus suggested a greater focus on operational policy knowledge and cost-effectiveness, with an emphasis on the more pragmatic side of good practices of countries' investments in early childhood. The World Bank also expressed interest in sharing a concept note developed by the World Bank Institute for a course on early childhood care and education.

Proposals

- Build upon the existing ECCE Consultative Group
- Coordinate the development of advocacy materials
- Foster linkages with the UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS)

Next steps

- Establish an inventory of relevant analytical work of existing programmes and activities linking health, education and nutrition with regards to young children, at international and national level
- Liaise with the other four convening agencies and other UN agencies (the World Food Programme (WFP) express interest in being involved)
- Identify willing developing countries and development partners to engage in sharing practices and specific actions.

* It was proposed that the World Bank take the lead on the afore-mentioned next steps, but no concrete agreement was reached.

3. Equity

Regarding the development of well-defined equity targets, Mr Hendrik van der Pol, Director, UIS, emphasized the necessity of identifying characteristics of the excluded groups and the causes of their exclusion.

The intricate connections between equity and quality were emphasized, and the action point on equity in the Oslo Declaration referred to, as it addresses equity both in terms of access and learning outcomes. The “*Learning Counts*” seminar hosted by UNESCO was cited as being particularly relevant in this regard, and Mr Burnett assured participants that the discussions of this seminar would be incorporated with other mechanisms addressing the same issue.

Knowledge and data sharing, assessment of legislation and dissemination of best practices are other key issues that were raised by participants during this discussion.

Proposals

- Establish a working group to look at what might be applicable and feasible
- Link activities on this topic with EFA-FTI and the upcoming *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010*
- Draw on the knowledge and work of the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education

- Strengthen the coordination between the World Bank, Global Monitoring Report, UIS and the Education Development Center (EDC)
- Collect data on marginalization of children at school
- Address levels of post-primary education

Next steps

- Mr Burnett indicated that UNESCO would explore this issue in greater depth and inform participants of concrete proposals at a later date.

4. Financing

Mr Olav Seim, Director, Donor Relations, EFA International Coordination Team, UNESCO, opened the discussion by highlighting the need to increase advocacy for financing and to strengthen cooperation with non-traditional/emerging donors. He also informed the meeting that UNESCO is planning to organize a conference in 2009 on financing education and development for non-traditional donors.

The lack of benchmarks for aid to education, particularly with respect to basic education, was cited as a major obstacle. The urgent need to replenish the FTI was also stressed, with additional commitments needed to guarantee available funding for countries that develop plans for FTI funding in 2009.

It was suggested that the World Bank be responsible for developing a stronger mechanism to monitor financial commitments from national governments and development partners, including follow-up of disbursements. It was also stressed that national governments and development partners should focus on using existing resources more effectively alongside increasing resources to education.

The World Bank and UNICEF expressed their interest in using the Oslo Declaration as an opportunity to strengthen their work on cost barriers to education, particularly as regards exploring the issue of abolition of school fees.

Next steps

- Develop benchmarks for donor countries on aid to education
- Advocate for financing, particularly for the replenishment of the FTI
- Organize a high-level event for non-traditional/emerging donors

Annex I: Final agenda of the Eighth High-Level Group Meeting on EFA

Tuesday 16 December 2008

8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Registration

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Senior Officials' meeting to discuss the draft Oslo Declaration, Holmenkollen Park Hotel

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Press Conference, Oslo City Hall

Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Mr Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway

H. M. Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Opening Ceremony including Cultural Programme, Oslo City Hall

Master of Ceremony: Ms Aase Kleveland

Welcome Addresses

Mr Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway

Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Opening Speeches

H. M. Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

H. R. H Crown Prince Haakon, Norway, UNDP Goodwill Ambassador

Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal

Ms Sissel Kyrkjebo, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador

Video message from Mr Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

Class of 2015 presentation, Global Campaign for Education

Mr Kailash Satyarthi, President, Global Campaign for Education

Signing by Mr Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development, Norway, and Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President, Senegal

5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Interlude with refreshments

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Panel discussion at the Oslo City Hall

Moderated by Ms Eva Bratholm, Director of Information and Public Affairs, NORAD

Theme 'Meeting the Global Challenges: Education as a Driver for Change'

Panellists:

Mr Nicholas Burnett, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

Ms Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education, South Africa

Mr Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development, Norway
Ms Hilde Johnson, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
Ms Joy Phumaphi, Vice-President, World Bank
Mr Craig Barrett, Chairman, Intel Corporation
Mr Greg Mortenson, Co-founder and Executive Director, Central Asia Institute

7:00 p.m.

Reception hosted by Mr Baard Vegar Solhjell, Norwegian Minister of Education, Oslo City Hall

Wednesday 17 December 2008

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Welcome and Introduction, Holmenkollen Park Hotel, Saga Hall

- **Opening remarks** by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO
- **Adoption of the Agenda**
- **Presentation of the draft Oslo Declaration** by Mr Nicholas Burnett, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Plenary Discussion I: Education for All: Strengthening Governance and the Commitment to Equity*

Co-Chairs:

- Mr Xinsheng Zhang, Deputy Minister of Education, China
- Mr Jakob Simonsen, Director, UNDP Nordic Office

Presentation of the key findings of the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR)

by Mr Kevin Watkins, Director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report Team

Discussants:

- Mr Bernard Lani Davo, Minister of Secondary Education and Vocational Training, Benin
- Ms Rosalie Kama-Niamayoua, Minister of Education, Congo
- Mr Shaik Baksh, Minister of Education, Guyana
- Ms Aishatu Jibril Dukku, Minister of Education, Nigeria
- Mr Moustapha Sourang, Minister of Secondary and Higher Education, Senegal
- Mr Kari Tapiola, Executive Director, International Labour Organization

Key messages

- ▶ The 2015 EFA targets for children, youth and adults are at increasing risk of being missed due to the failure of the international community to address global inequality and to the failure of governments to tackle inequality within their countries.
- ▶ Equity and quality must be at the core of all education policies. Governments should develop well-defined targets for reducing disparities based on wealth, location, ethnicity, gender and other indicators for disadvantage, and monitor progress towards achieving them.
- ▶ Decentralizing financial responsibility and management for education to local levels can exacerbate inequalities if central governments do not maintain a strong role.

Questions:

- How can governments develop targets for reducing disparities in educational access and achievement, and monitor progress?
- How can we ensure that governance reforms in education, particularly the devolution of authority to local governments and recourse to private providers, are not to the detriment of disadvantaged groups?
- How can education planning be integrated into wider national development and poverty reduction strategies?
- How can health, nutrition and education policies be better coordinated with respect to early childhood, within a poverty focus?

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Ministerial lunch hosted by Mr Erik Solheim, Norwegian Minister of the Environment and International Development, Nobel Room**Theme: Girls' education as a driver for gender equality and development**

Chair: Mr Erik Solheim, Minister of Environment and International Development, Norway

Special guest: Ms Angelique Kidjo, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador

Speakers:

- Ms Ulla Tørnaes, Minister of Development Cooperation, Denmark
- Ms Marie Odile Bonkougou, Minister of Basic Education and Literacy, Burkina Faso
- Ms Stangeline Ralambomanana Randrianarisandy, Minister of Education, Madagascar
- Ms Hilde Johnson, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director
- Mr Greg Mortensen, Co-founder of Central Asia Institute
- Ms May Rihani, Co-Chair of UNGEI Global Advisory Committee

Parallel drafting session of the Oslo Declaration

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Plenary Discussion II: Recruiting and Rewarding Teachers

Co-Chairs:

- Mr Bambang Sudibyo, Minister of National Education, Indonesia
- Mr Baard Vegar Solhjell, Minister of Education, Norway

Discussants:

- Mr Dato Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Minister of Education, Malaysia
- Dr Yousry El Gamal, Minister of Education, Egypt
- Ms Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, Federal Minister for Economic Development and Cooperation, Germany
- Mr Masaharu Kohno, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan
- Mr Ivan Lewis, Vice Minister for International Development, United Kingdom
- Mr Thulas Nxesi, President, Education International

Key messages

► Qualified and motivated teachers are key to improving both access to learning and the quality of education.

- ▶ Teacher policies must address training, status and working conditions, and ensure adequate remuneration and professional development opportunities, with a special focus on attracting women to the profession in countries where discrimination against girls persists.
- ▶ Education for All will not be achieved without a massive effort to recruit and train teachers, and to improve their status and recognition.

Questions:

- How can national governments and development partners collaborate to improve technical capacity for planning to address the teacher gap?
- How can financial resources be increased and better utilised to allow for recruitment, training and retention of teachers in adequate numbers?
- What linkages may be established between short-term solutions and sustainable long-term policies with regard to the employment and working conditions of teachers?
- How can equity be inscribed within teacher policies to ensure adequate educational coverage for disadvantaged groups and regions?

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Plenary Discussion III: Financing EFA: Respecting the Compact

Co-Chairs:

- Ms Stangeline Ralambomanana Randrianarisandy, Minister of National Education, Madagascar
- Mr Graeme Wheeler, Managing Director, World Bank

Discussants:

- Mr Jumanne Abdallah Maghembe, Minister of Education and Vocational Training, Tanzania
- Mr Joakim Stymne, State Secretary, Ministry of International Development Cooperation, Sweden
- Mr Joël Desrosiers Jean-Pierre, Minister of National Education and Professional Training, Haiti
- Mr Luis Riera Figueras, Director General of Development Policy, European Commission

Key messages

- ▶ National financing accounts for the bulk of education spending. Government spending on education is a measure of a country's commitment to EFA. Low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia tend to invest the smallest shares of GNP in education.
- ▶ Donor commitments to basic education in low-income countries amounted to \$3.8 billion in 2006, leaving an annual financing gap of close to \$7 billion. Education for All will not be reached without bold increases in financial commitments and predictable aid flows to support developing country efforts.
- ▶ Better results: to make aid work better for education, donors must continue to improve coordination among themselves and to align their aid with national priorities.

Questions:

- How can we approach the current crises, with the reality of constrained resources, as an opportunity for innovation and strategically advancing new approaches to education financing and achieving the EFA goals?
- How can national governments generate additional domestic resources for education?

- How are donors planning to raise and target financing resources, in spite of the financial crisis?
- How should EFA partners support and finance strategies and partnerships to ensure results in education, including placing equity at the center and taking a holistic sector approach?

5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Finalization and adoption of the Oslo Declaration

Chairperson: Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

Closing remarks

Mr Jean-Pierre Onvéhoun Ezin, Commissioner, Human Resources, Science and Technology Department, African Union

Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

Mr Håkon A. Gulbrandsen, Deputy Minister for International Development, Norway

Mr Baard Vegar Solhjell, Minister of Education, Norway

6:30 p.m.

Press Meeting (place to be confirmed)

8:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Dinner hosted by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

Thursday 18 December 2008

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Senior officials' follow-up meeting

Annex II: Opening address by Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

16 December 2008

Your Majesties,
Mr President,
Your Royal Highnesses,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All. I wish to thank Norway, and in particular Prime Minister Stoltenberg, for the generous offer to host this meeting, and for the strong and consistent support they have provided for EFA. Let me also thank our special guests: Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan; President Wade of Senegal; and his Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon of Norway. Your speeches will set the tone for tomorrow's Ministerial meeting.

We gather at a time of both crisis and possibility.

Recent years have witnessed rising inequalities between and within countries. The global financial meltdown, which risks hitting the world's poor the hardest, could deepen these inequalities even further.

But this crisis is also a call for reinforced global collaboration. It compels us to act together and shift the tide towards greater inclusion, equity and social justice.

Times of crisis are also times of opportunity if we can demonstrate sufficient courage and political will, and articulate a clear vision of where we want our societies to be in 2015 and beyond.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A strong dynamic has been at work since the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000. Enrolments in primary education have increased twice as fast as in the 1990s. Some of the world's poorest countries have made dramatic advances. They have increased spending on basic education. They have abolished school fees, built new classrooms, hired more teachers and reached out to the most marginalized. External aid has supported this process, and is becoming more effective and better aligned with national priorities.

We need to tell this success story. It shows that global commitments can make a difference. Each year, since 2002, the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* has helped us to understand this story. It has alerted us to challenges and defined the policy priorities ahead.

The first is to place equity at the centre of the EFA agenda. The 2009 Report shows how unacceptable inequalities are undermining progress.

The children of the poor have less chance of going to school than the children of the rich. These children are vulnerable. They are likely to belong to an indigenous group, a linguistic minority, an immigrant community, to live in a remote region, an urban slum or a conflict-affected area. They often have to work to support their families. This leaves us with some 75 million children still out of primary school; 55 per cent are girls.

Yet we know what to do. Policies exist that act on the causes of exclusion.

Like the 'Case des Tout-Petits' programme in Senegal, they offer care and protection for the very young, because an estimated one in three children reaches the first year of school suffering from malnutrition. I hope that President Wade, who has done so much to promote EFA, will tell us more about this innovative programme later.

Policies do exist. They provide financial support and incentives to the poorest households. They promote the benefits of girls' education, because gender enrolment gaps, while narrowing, remain large across much of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. They work with parents and communities to deliver literacy and skills programmes.

Success should be measured by what policies do for the poorest 20 per cent, in terms of access and in terms of learning.

This brings me to the second challenge: the need to improve quality. Millions of children drop out before completing primary school. Learning assessments document very low levels of basic literacy and numeracy.

It is not possible to escape extreme poverty and fully participate in today's knowledge-driven societies without a top quality primary education. We must have more ambition for the world's next generation.

This meeting will put the spotlight on teachers because without them EFA simply cannot be achieved. The world needs 18 million new teachers just to provide universal primary education.

But the profession is facing difficulties in attracting new recruits and keeping them.

We need an international alliance to support countries in upgrading the teaching profession. We need teachers who can instill a love for learning, who are sensitive to the different needs of learners, and who can promote environmental awareness and responsible citizenship.

The third challenge regards aid. We agreed in Dakar that no country with a credible education plan would be left behind for lack of resources.

Aid has helped governments to reduce the number of out-of-school children, to build schools where there were none, to increase spending on education.

But aid commitments for basic education have stagnated since 2004 at around US\$ 4 billion, leaving an annual funding shortage of some US\$ 7 billion. Unless donors act urgently to fill this gap, progress made since Dakar will be seriously jeopardized.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

How, then, to respond to these challenges? What is the way forward?

To begin, we must promote our case for EFA within and, especially, outside education circles.

To a certain extent, we are being heard. At the UN MDG Summit in September, world leaders reiterated the importance of education for achieving anti-poverty goals.

The “Class of 2015”, launched by the Global Campaign for Education, secured commitments of US\$ 4.5 billion to expand access to learning opportunities.

We must keep up this momentum and do better. If we are to accelerate progress towards EFA, we must act together now to tackle deep and persistent inequalities.

National governments are first and foremost responsible for making equity a key principle guiding all policy and resource allocations. Donors have a duty to support this process, to increase aid and to target it more effectively towards the poorest countries and most excluded groups.

Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, requires higher, more sustained and more predictable support.

Our aim is to make education systems at all levels more inclusive, more responsive to diversity and more attentive to quality.

It is not possible to envisage better health, better nutrition, higher incomes and safer environmental practices without investment in early childhood care, in adult literacy and in youth and adult skills programmes.

We must do more – much more – to address these neglected EFA goals.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Despite progress since 2000, this is no time for complacency. Real risks remain. It is a concern that several nations furthest from achieving EFA have cut spending since 1999.

It is a concern that some of the largest donors are allocating small shares of their bilateral aid to basic education where the foundations for the future are set.

It is a concern that, on current trends, 29 million children will still be out of school in 2015.

It is a grave concern that, on present trends, there will still be 700 million adults unable to read and write in 2015, only 10 per cent fewer than today.

The financial crisis cannot serve as an excuse for reducing spending on education. Any decrease in investment now will be difficult to make up for later on. If we want all children in primary school by 2015 we must act urgently. Education is not a quick fix. Education is a long-term investment. It carries lifetime benefits, and high individual and social returns. In short, it is the wisest policy choice governments can make for national development, for widening choices, for building more peaceful and united societies.

This month we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It affirms that “everyone has the right to education”. Each of us here today has some leverage to make this right a reality. Collectively, we can make a difference. Let this meeting be the occasion to reaffirm our commitment, and redouble our efforts towards Education for All.

Thank you very much.

Annex III: Opening address of Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg

16 December 2008

Your Majesties,
President Wade,
Your Royal Highness,
Director-General Matsuura,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Oslo.

We are honoured to host the High-level Meeting on Education for All. Three months ago we met in New York to discuss the way ahead for the Millennium Development Goals. I was honoured to lead the roundtable on education and health. We took concrete initiatives to build thousands of classrooms and train thousands of teachers. Norway alone announced that we will allocate US\$ 150 million to a UNICEF programme for girls' education. Now we must make sure that the world delivers on these promises.

So that we achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goal number two: primary education for all by 2015. Because although we are halfway in time, we are not halfway to our target.

Good progress has been made in achieving universal primary education.

Since the turn of the century the number of who have received education has increased by around 40 million. However, 75 million children are still not in school. To reach the UN Millennium Development Goal on education it is estimated that US\$ 9 billion a year will be needed.

But, in the words of Derek Bok, former President of Harvard University:
"If you think education is expensive, try ignorance."

Quite simply, education makes sense.
Education pays off.

It increases personal income. And it increases national income. Education reduces poverty and inequality. It lays the foundation for sound governance and effective institutions. In other words: no education, no development. And nothing is more conducive to development than investing in girls' education.

Education empowers women. But most important of all, education is the foundation for our development as human beings, for self-realization and self-esteem.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With more children in school, more resources are required. And we need to focus on the areas where the challenges are the greatest. In rural areas and urban slums. In the least developed countries and in fragile states. And we must improve children's health, so that children can go to school.

The task has been made more challenging by the financial crisis. We cannot allow the financial crisis to compromise our efforts to reach our goals. We cannot allow the weakest to be hit the hardest. We must honour our promises. We must dedicate the next seven years to the bottom billion. Norway will do its part. Next year Norway's development assistance will represent 1 per cent of our gross national income.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We all remember our first day of school. We were curious and excited. We had our very first glimpse of the boundless universe of knowledge. Every child has the right to experience that moment.

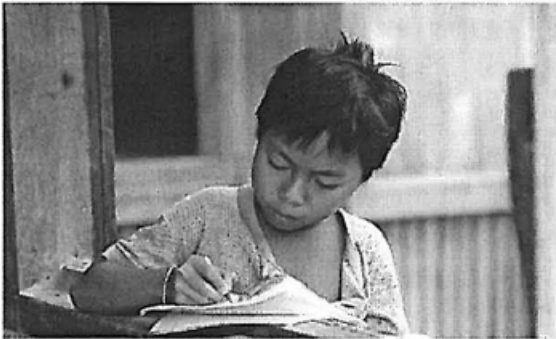
Our job as politicians is to make that moment come true for the 75 million children who now can only dream of it.

Let this conference help make education a reality for every child.

Thank you.

Annex IV: 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report Presentation

EFA Global Monitoring Report	2	0	0	9
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Overcoming inequality:
why governance matters

Oslo, December 2008
Kevin Watkins

EFA
GMR
EDUCATION
FOR ALL
GLOBAL
MONITORING
REPORT

Key messages

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

- There has been strong progress towards many EFA goals, but...
- Key targets for 2015 will be missed – and time is running out
- Governments are failing to tackle inequality, as are current approaches to governance reform
- Aid to education is stagnating and donors are not meeting their commitments

2

EFA & the MDGs

➤ EFA as a foundation for the MDGs

- The Education for All agenda is broader than the MDGs
- Education can help unlock progress on the MDGs:
 - ▷ Broad-based growth to halve extreme poverty
 - ▷ Reducing child and maternal mortality
 - ▷ Tackling child malnutrition
 - ▷ Strengthening democracy and citizenship

3

EFA & the MDGs

➤ Education for some – global and national inequalities persist

- The global divide: between the world's richest and poorest nations
- The wealth gap: within countries, children from the richest households up to 5 times more likely to be enrolled than those from the poorest
- The quality divide: many children leave school lacking basic literacy and numeracy skills

4

EFA & the MDGs

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

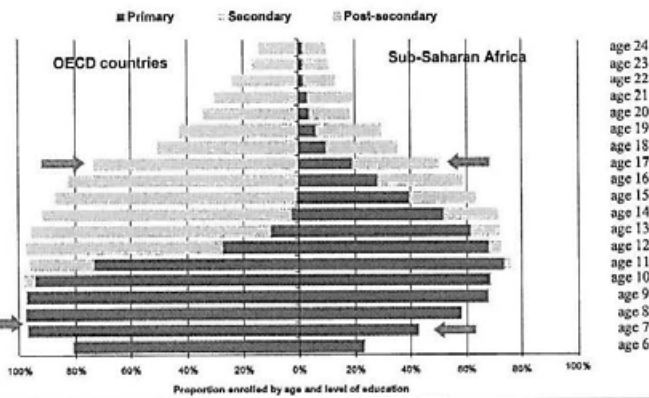
▪ The global divide: between the world's richest and poorest nations

OECD countries:

- > By age 7, almost all children are in school
- > At 17 yrs, 70% are in secondary school

Sub-Saharan Africa:

- > At age 7, only about 40% are in school
- > At 17 yrs, 30% are in secondary....but 20% still in primary

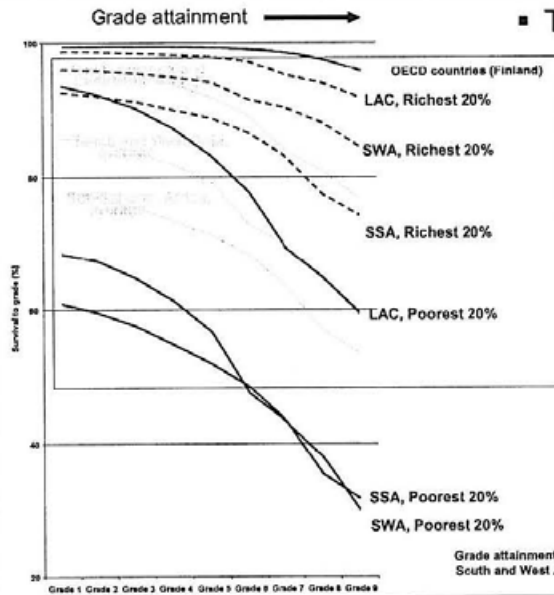


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EFA & the MDGs

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

▪ The wealth gap:



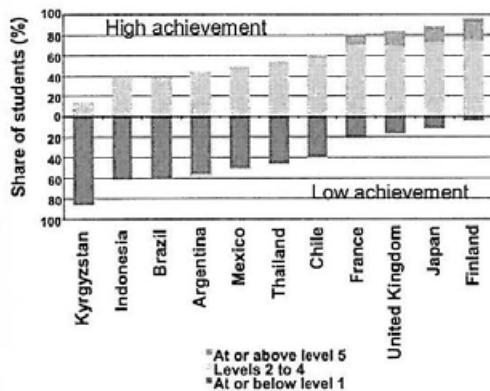
Children in the poorest 20% of households more likely to drop out than those in the richest 20%

6

Monitoring EFA

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

➤ Education quality – the learning divide



- Low average level of learning in many developing countries relative to developed countries
- PISA assessments place over 60% of children in Brazil and Indonesia scoring in the lowest score quintile
- Absolute learning levels in many countries are very low
- Global learning divide mirrored by social-economic divide within countries

7

Monitoring EFA

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

➤ Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is still neglected

- Malnutrition as a barrier to EFA – 1 in 3 children suffer worldwide (higher in South Asia)
- Economic growth not enough – Despite growth, India's child mortality is declining too slowly
- Successful programmes make a difference
 - Mexico: conditional cash transfer programme achieving gains in school progression and learning
 - Bolivia: integrated programme provides nutrients and learning environments for poor children under 6 with gains in learning and child health
 - Philippines: nutrition programme registered improvements in cognitive development
- Rich countries also face problems
 - United States: poor and ethnic groups lagging behind in ECCE, leading to inequalities in educational outcomes

8

Monitoring EFA

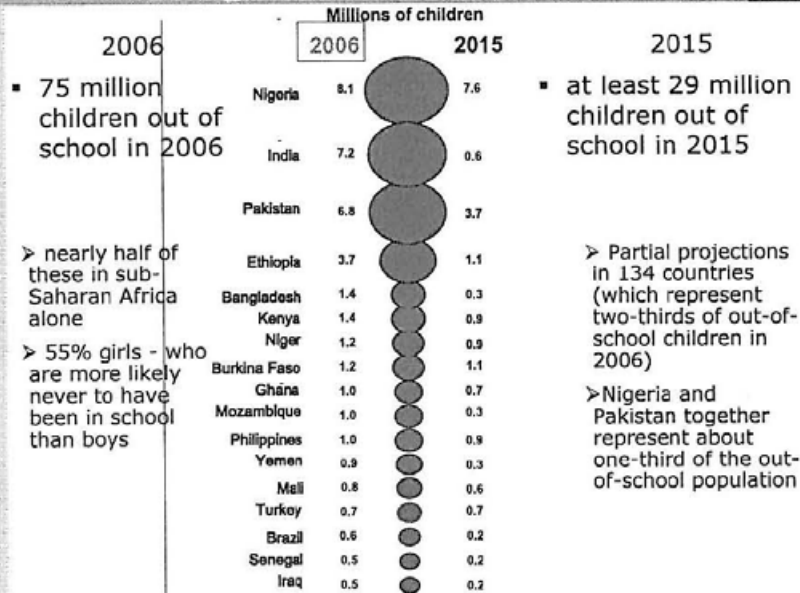
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

- Steady but uneven progress in universal primary education (UPE)
 - Since 1999, the primary NER for developing countries has increased at twice the rate of the pre-Dakar decade
 - Fewer children out of school in 2006 than in 2000
 - ✓ Ethiopia and Tanzania have each reduced their numbers of out-of-school children by 3 million since Dakar.
 - ✓ Nepal and Bangladesh have increased enrolment of girls and the disadvantaged.
 - ✓ Mauritania, Morocco and Yemen have registered strong gains.
 - ... but the world is not on track for UPE by 2015

9

Monitoring EFA

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009



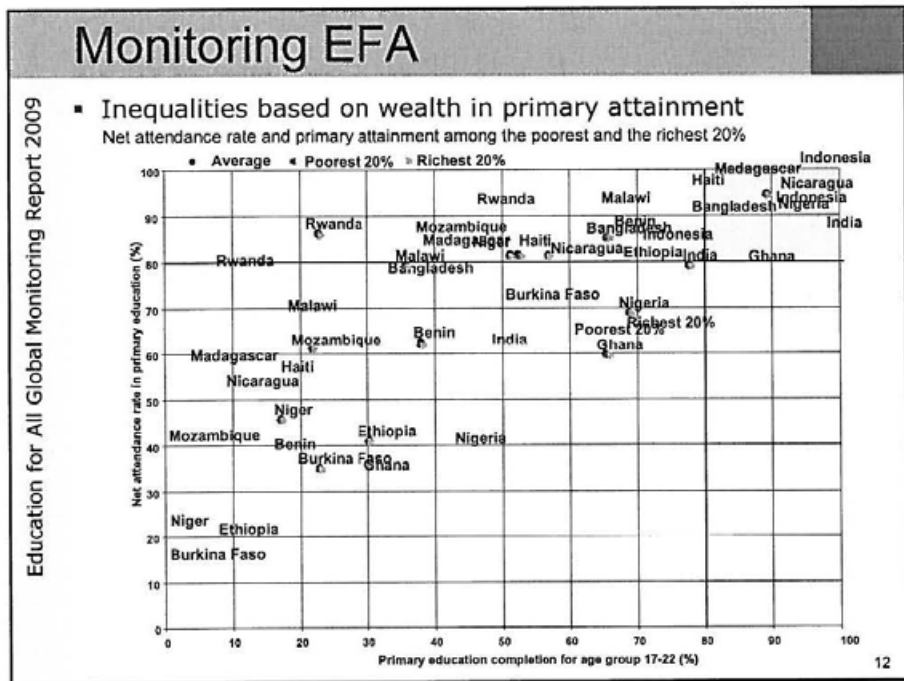
10

Monitoring EFA

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

- Global, regional and national inequalities are a barrier to progress in UPE
 - Wealth: children from rich and poor backgrounds move in different worlds.
 - ▷ Poor children are heavily over-represented in out-of-school numbers:
 - In Cameroon, Kenya, Indonesia, Nicaragua – poorest 20% make up over 40% of out-of-school children
 - Other inequalities:
 - ▷ gender – over half the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States have yet to achieve gender parity in primary education
 - ▷ location (rural v. urban)
 - ▷ minorities
 - ▷ language
 - ▷ disability

11



Monitoring EFA

➤ Acute teacher shortages still a problem

- To achieve UPE by 2015, we will need to recruit and train:
 - Sub-Saharan Africa - 3.8 million teachers
 - East Asia - 4 million teachers
 - South and West Asia - 3.6 million teachers
- National pupil/teacher ratios mask large disparities between rich-poor, rural-urban, indigenous-non-indigenous areas.
- the majority of non-trained teachers are concentrated in rural and poor areas

13

Monitoring EFA

➤ Little progress in reducing numbers of illiterate adults

- Still 776 millions illiterate adults in 2006, two-thirds are women. This represents 16% of the global adult population

Projected number of adult illiterates (age 15+), by gender and region, 2015



- Projections for 2015 – at least 700 million illiterate adults
- Literacy gap –Adult literacy rates can vary up to 40 percentage points between the richest and poorest households within a given country.

14

Governance for equity

➤ Governance reform in education

- Education governance = the formal and informal processes through which policies are formulated, priorities identified, resources allocated, and reforms implemented and monitored

Bad education governance is seen in:

- ✗ overcrowded, underfinanced schools
- ✗ absent teachers
- ✗ unaccountable to families
- ✗ high levels of inequality
- ✗ low levels of learning

Good governance aims for:

- ✓ Transparency
- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Equal opportunity for all citizens
- ✓ Enhancing the voice and participation of citizens

- The governance reform agenda:
 - ▷ Decentralize to sub-national bodies
 - ▷ Devolve authority and decision-making to schools and parents
 - ▷ Expand choice and competition
 - ▷ Flexible recruitment and financial incentives for teachers

15

Governance for equity

➤ Evidence and lessons

- Financial decentralization comes with threats to equity
 - ▷ Lesson: governments should retain a strong role in leveling the playing field
- Devolution to schools can perpetuate inequality and over-burden local providers
 - ▷ Lesson: governments need to create an enabling environment to strengthen 'voice' and build capacity
- Choice and competition is not a panacea for state failure, or a prescription for equity
 - ▷ Lesson: if public sector provision is broken, the governance challenge is to fix it
 - ▷ Lesson: avoid blueprints – and don't export them
- Recognize the limits to contract teacher recruitment and performance-related pay
- Poverty-reduction strategies can not work without integrating education
 - ▷ Lesson: integrate education into wider strategies for overcoming poverty and inequality

16

Aid & aid governance

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

➤ Donors are failing to deliver on their Dakar commitments

- Aid commitments: global shortfalls and education deficits
 - ▷ Donors falling short of 2010 commitments: meeting these requires additional US\$30 billion
 - ▷ In 2006: aid to basic education US\$5.1bn (same as 2004)
 - ▷ Aid to basic education in low income countries: US\$3.8bn but US\$11bn needed annually to meet EFA goals

Year	Total aid to basic education	Total aid to education
1999	4.5	7.3
2000	3.5	6.6
2001	3.0	7.0
2002	3.5	8.3
2003	3.9	9.4
2004	7.2	11.0
2005	7.0	8.5
2006	5.1	11.3

- Fast Track Initiative under threat:
 - ▷ Potential financing gap of US\$2.2bn by 2010

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Aid & aid governance

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009

➤ Equity matters

- Donors vary in their commitments to basic education in low-income countries

- Total aid to education
- Total aid to education going to basic education in low-income countries

Donor	Total aid to education	Total aid to education going to basic education in low-income countries
Netherlands	~1000	~600
United Kingdom	~800	~400
International Development Association	~1000	~400
European Commission	~1000	~400
United States	~1000	~200
France	~1800	~100
Canada	~400	~100
Japan	~1000	~100
Norway	~400	~100
Sweden	~400	~100
Germany	~1000	~100

- Some countries such as the Netherlands and UK allocate over 60% of aid to basic education in low income countries
- ...France, Japan and Germany allocate only a small fraction

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Aid & aid governance

➤ The Paris agenda: a mixed record

- Improving aid governance: Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005). Until now, progress is variable:
 - ✓ Shift from projects to programmes
 - Increase from 33% to 54% in 2005-2006
 - ✓ National ownership
 - Conditions vary (India v Mozambique)
 - ✓ Aligning aid to national priorities & improve predictability
 - Some positive examples, but some donors unwilling to work through national structures
 - » Despite Mongolia's strong financial management system, only 17% of aid is managed through it
 - ✓ Improving donor coordination to reduce inefficiency
 - Progress in some countries (Ethiopia – over half of missions were joint missions in 2007), **but...**
 - » In 2007, the Niger hosted 600 donor missions – less than 100 were joint
 - » In 2005, 18 countries had to deal with 12 donors for basic education alone

19

Conclusions

➤ Policy recommendations:

- Get serious about equity – and set targets for reducing disparities
- Strengthen links between education planning and poverty-reduction strategies
- Back EFA targets with equitable financing
- Commit to quality education
- Recognize the limits to choice and competition
- Deliver on aid commitments (now)

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Annex V: Oslo Declaration

OSLO DECLARATION

“ACTING TOGETHER”

1. We, Ministers, leading officials of multilateral and bilateral agencies, senior representatives of civil society and private sector organisations, gathered at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO and of the Minister of Environment and International Development of Norway, in Oslo from 16 to 17 December, for the Eighth Education for All (EFA) High-Level Group Meeting. We are deeply grateful for the warm hospitality offered by the Norwegian government.

2. This Eighth High-Level Group meeting takes place in the context of a global economic slowdown spurred by a financial crisis unprecedented since the 1930s. It will be imperative to protect and insulate the world’s poorest children, youth and adults from the worst effects of the crisis, as they carry the least responsibility for these events. The crisis should not serve as justification for any reduction in national spending and international aid to education. Instead, steadfast support for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the EFA and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is more vital than it was before the crisis.

Reaffirming the centrality of education for development

3. In this context, we reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right, to be respected at all times. It is one of the most effective tools for achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth and recovery, reducing poverty, hunger and child labour, improving health, incomes and livelihoods, for promoting peace, democracy and environmental awareness. Education empowers individuals with the knowledge, values and skills they need to make choices and shape their future. Universal access to quality basic education and better learning outcomes are the drivers to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. As reaffirmed at the September 2008 UN High-Level Event on the MDGs, sustained investment in education and health is essential for reaching the MDGs.

4. *We therefore agree to better plan and coordinate global advocacy efforts for all six EFA goals. We task the EFA convening agencies and interested EFA partners to further develop a joint EFA advocacy plan of action and present its first results to the next meeting. We shall, for that purpose, welcome and work with all existing initiatives, including the broad alliance of the “Class of 2015”.*

5. Educational strategies need to be integrated within broader anti-poverty and national development policy frameworks. The fact that child malnutrition and ill health remain a major obstacle to educational access and achievement for the poor highlights the intricate connections among education, health and social conditions. It underscores the need for stronger inter-sectoral policy coordination.

6. *We accordingly request the EFA convening agencies, to engage with relevant UN agencies such as the WHO and the WFP as well as interested EFA partners in order to better coordinate education, health and nutrition initiatives in integrated programmes, targeting young children in poor communities in countries far from EFA. We commit to support such initiatives that should be country driven and backed by development partners.*

Making equity a priority in education: why governance matters

7. Since the World Education Forum in 2000, many countries, including some of the poorest, have taken bold and courageous actions, often supported by the development

partners, to improve access to education. However, on present trends, 29 million children will still have no access to primary schooling in 2015. We subscribe to the conclusion of the International Conference on Education held in November 2008 in Geneva that inclusive quality education is fundamental to achieving human, social and economic development. Policies must therefore focus on reducing disparities based on gender, wealth, rural/urban and other differences. To achieve greater equity, national governments and their partners must expand early childhood care and basic education; ensure affordable learning opportunities at post-primary levels and address adult literacy needs.

8. Gender disparities are still deeply entrenched in many countries and affect both boys and girls. They are often magnified by poverty and other forms of social disadvantage. Girls and women are disproportionately affected by malnutrition, health hazards and by gender-based violence including sexual harassment. Girls are especially disadvantaged in countries experiencing conditions of fragility and during emergencies. Special measures are required to reach them and to promote an enabling learning environment.

9. Improving learning outcomes for all students is an imperative. To this end interested national governments must be supported to develop indicators and contextualized instruments and standards of quality for assessment and monitoring and invest in quality inputs and processes.

10. Governance reforms in favour of decentralization and the introduction of greater choice and competition in educational provision must carry appropriate safeguards against possible inequitable effects on the poor and excluded.

11. Capacity concerns are acute in countries experiencing conditions of fragility. In such circumstances the development of individual, organizational and institutional capacities is of utmost importance for strengthening weak government structures and state legitimacy. Development partners should use more flexible, timely and innovative mechanisms such as the proposed EFA-Fast Track Initiative (FTI) “Education Transition Fund” to respond to high-risk situations, in line with country-led approaches.

12. We call upon EFA partners to support national commitments to educational equity, both with regards to access, attendance and to learning processes and outcomes. This should include the development of well-defined and gender-sensitive targets to measure equity, as well as indicators and monitoring tools to this end. Joint knowledge and data sharing on equity in education should be supported by the EFA partners, led by the convening agencies, to help ensure capacity building and improved policy development, planning and implementation.

Increasing financing and targeting the most in need

13. In a majority of countries, progress towards EFA since 2000 has benefited from a commendable effort to increase both national public funding and aid to basic education. However the recent stagnation in aid commitments and the cut in the share of national income devoted to education in some countries are causes for serious concern. The global economic slowdown could aggravate this trend. If development partners were simply to fulfil their previous pledges, it would lead to a sharp increase in financing for developing countries, which would in turn mitigate the impact of the global financial crisis.

14. National governments and development partners must increase financing of policies and programmes that promote the inclusion of all children and improve learning outcomes for all. To this end, fee-free primary schooling should be implemented as a basic right. In line with the Accra Agenda for Action’s call for aid effectiveness, national governments and development partners should allocate educational funding where it is most needed and ensure that it is more efficiently and effectively used. Development aid should be targeted at countries furthest from the EFA goals and in particular to those experiencing conditions of

fragility or receiving limited external support. Furthermore, funds should reach the most disadvantaged groups within these countries. We accordingly take note of the December 2008 Statement from the High-Level Event on Financing Education in Conflict Affected Areas held in Doha, Qatar, calling for priority to be placed on providing and protecting education in these circumstances. To target those in greatest need, existing financing mechanisms and other innovative approaches should be tapped drawing on civil society and the private sector.

15. *We urgently call on national governments to allocate adequate domestic resources (4-6% of GNP / 15-20% of public expenditure) to education, on development partners to increase official development assistance in accordance with the Doha declaration and on all EFA partners to prioritise investment in basic education within a balanced approach to the whole sector. We further urge the development partners to deliver on past commitments and ensure the timely flow of adequate resources through various bilateral and multilateral aid channels including FTI Trust Funds, through which they assist the most EFA challenged countries. In countries making progress towards EFA we call on governments and the development partners to better target those still excluded from education.*

Recruiting, training, deploying and retaining teachers

16. Without adequate numbers of professionally qualified teachers, including female teachers, who are deployed in the right places, well-remunerated and motivated, adequately supported, and proficient in local languages, we cannot offer the world's children quality education.

17. Globally 18 million new primary teachers will be needed in the next 7 years just to achieve universal primary education. National governments must strike a balance between the short-term need to get teachers into classrooms and the longer term goal of building up a high-quality professional teaching force. Addressing the teacher gap requires country driven long-term strategies and firm commitments. Policies must encompass attention to professional development opportunities, adequate employment and teaching conditions and greater participation of teachers in decision-making via social dialogue.

18. *We urge national governments, with appropriate technical support to map out their short and medium-term needs for recruitment, deployment, training and retention of teachers. We call upon development partners to support national efforts in this area, working with governments, regional bodies, civil society and teacher organizations, to identify and meet the needs specified, and provide predictable support to cover the associated costs.*

19. *We endorse the creation of an international Task Force on 'Teachers for EFA'; a voluntary global alliance of EFA partners working together to address the 'teacher gap'. We invite the Task Force to further develop the proposals contained in its Action Plan, based on the principles of national ownership, and to report to the next High-Level Group meeting. To that end, it shall explore the possibilities for South-South and North-South-South cooperation in relation to teachers, including the E-9 Bali declaration. Moreover, the Task Force shall focus particularly on those countries furthest away from reaching the EFA goals and those with the largest teacher gaps. We agree to set up a secretariat, supported by willing partners, to assist the Task Force.*

Next Meeting

20. We welcome and accept the offer of the Government of Ethiopia and of the African Union Commission to host the Ninth High-Level Group meeting on EFA to be held in Addis Ababa, in February 2010.