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Education for All
International Coordination Unit

REPORT 2007



High-Level Group
on Education for All
Seventh Meeting

Dakar, Senegal
11-13 December 2007

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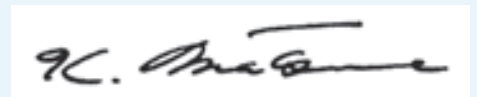
Foreword

The Seventh Meeting of the High-Level Group took place at a critical juncture for Education for All (EFA). The year 2007 was significant for all countries and international organizations and for civil society involved in the EFA movement: the mid-way point towards achieving the EFA goals. This occasion offered a unique opportunity to undertake a much-needed assessment of progress and challenges. It gave us a chance to take stock of our common achievements and to outline key steps necessary in the coming years.

This report indicates that the members of the High-Level Group were fully aware of the particular challenges faced by countries confronted by conditions of fragility, as well as the necessity to focus on the financing of the EFA goals, especially those currently being neglected; these were identified as early childhood care and education (ECCE), adult literacy and gender parity. These priority areas of focus emerged clearly from the evidence presented in the *2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report*, and through the passionate speeches given by youth representatives in the opening ceremony.

I am heartened by the High-Level Group's fresh determination to address certain vital EFA issues, notably improving the quality of education for learners of all ages and including those who remain excluded from basic education. This demonstration of renewed commitment will be crucial to accelerating the drive towards achieving EFA.

Given that the World Education Forum in 2000 was held in Dakar and gave sharper definition to the challenge of achieving the EFA goals, the Senegalese capital was an especially appropriate venue, once again, for our deliberations, and Senegal's progress in implementing ECCE programmes as well as its increased investments in school infrastructure and teacher-training programmes provided a positive backdrop for the High-Level Group's discussions. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the President, Government and people of Senegal for generously hosting the High-Level Group. I am encouraged by the outcomes of this meeting and by the re-affirmation, at this pivotal moment, of our common commitment to overcome the obstacles in the path of EFA as we approach 2015.



Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General of UNESCO

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Introduction

Seven years after the adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action, leaders in education from twenty-nine countries, five multilateral agencies and ten civil society networks convened, once again in Dakar, to assess global progress to date on achieving the EFA agenda and to re-examine the remaining challenges. The Seventh Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, held in Dakar, Senegal, from 11 to 13 December 2007, brought together representatives from all parts of the EFA movement.

Mr Moustapha Sourang, Minister of Education of Senegal, chaired the opening ceremony of the meeting, which included a keynote address by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, as well as speeches from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, and representatives on behalf of the Presidents of Benin, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria. The youth perspective on EFA was also given during this ceremony, through speeches by four youth representatives from various regions of the world, organized by the Global Campaign for Education.

The High-Level Group discussions took place in five main sessions, on the following topics:

- ▷ Introduction - Messages from the five convening agencies on EFA
- ▷ Education for All by 2015 – Will we make it?
- ▷ Reaching the unreached – What do we need to do to promote equity and inclusion, and address disparities within countries?
- ▷ Quality makes the difference – Next steps to improve quality of education
- ▷ Financing – Resource mobilization and its effective use – What needs to change?
 - Neglected EFA goals
 - Domestic and external resources

A final session was devoted to the approval of the Dakar Communiqué, which was drafted during the meeting by the members of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) on EFA and adopted after a lengthy discussion by the participants of the High-Level Group (see appendix).

Prior to the High-Level Group meeting, the annual Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) Partnership Meeting took place, which included an Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) meeting and a Catalytic Fund meeting. These meetings were scheduled to strengthen collaboration between all EFA partners; many of the participants also participated in the High-Level Group meeting and thus brought forward insights from the EFA-FTI meetings.

This report summarizes the meeting's sessions and discussions, beginning with the opening ceremony, the introduction to the meeting and the six sessions that followed.

■ Opening ceremony

After enthusiastically welcoming participants during his introductory remarks Mr Sourang gave the floor to Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, who spoke about the importance of holding this High-Level Group in Dakar, at the mid-way point towards achieving the EFA agenda. He described the achievements thus far and the obstacles that remain, as noted in the 2008 *Global Monitoring Report*. With more children in school today than ever before, and keeping in mind the rapid pace of change in today's society, it is imperative that we are attentive to the challenges of supporting countries, financially and in terms of capacity-development, across all six EFA goals, particularly those that remain neglected, he said. He called for a re-doubling of efforts to continue the positive momentum among all four engaged constituencies: national governments, donors, multilateral agencies and civil society.

Following the Director-General's speech, the four youth representatives took the floor and reminded High-Level Group participants that all children have the right to an education, without discrimination. Hailing from Colombia, India, Liberia and Senegal, these four speakers, aged 11 to 14, urged participants to stop war and establish peace, and to respect children and invest in them, as they are the world's future. On behalf of all children worldwide, they reminded governments that education is a mode of development, stating that 'an educated population is a population prepared for the world'.

Representatives spoke on behalf of the Presidents of Benin, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria, acknowledging the global strides that have been made to achieve the EFA goals and outlining the many remaining challenges. They spoke about the responsibility of countries to deliver on their promises, notably donor countries, in order for the less fortunate countries to develop more rapidly towards the prosperity they hope for. They spoke of reforming education systems so that they provide students with the skills relevant to today's society and job market, pushing for increased vocational and technical training.

President Wade then gave the keynote address, thanking Mr Matsuura for his dedication and drive in pushing forward the EFA agenda. He asked participants if the world is indeed on the right track to achieving the EFA goals, citing data from the *2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report* that indicates many are not, despite recent progress. He emphasized the importance of ensuring the following three points: that every child is enrolled in school, that every child finishes primary school and that every child attains a minimal skill level. Early childhood care and education is essential to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), and Senegal has made tremendous progress in this neglected area with its ECCE programme, *La Case des Tout-Petits*. He described how these programmes, in which community members are heavily involved, incorporate culturally relevant songs, games, toys and stories to ensure that children aged 2 to 6 are prepared to attend primary school and hopefully continue through the Senegalese education system.

He urged the international community to continue to support developing countries, notably those in post-conflict areas and those facing extreme fragility, enabling them to build and operate functioning education systems. He ended by reaffirming Senegal's commitment to achieving EFA, reminding those present that 40 per cent of the country's national budget is spent on education.

■ Multilateral viewpoints

After welcoming participants and thanking Senegal for hosting the meeting, the Director-General of UNESCO underlined the importance of reinforcing the synergies and common efforts of all EFA partners. He highlighted the three major messages that emerged from the

2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report: ensuring excluded groups have viable opportunities, raising the level of quality education and urgently scaling up funding, including for neglected EFA goals and both domestic and external funding. He spoke about the lack in aid to basic education having fallen by 27 per cent in 2005, according to the latest Organisation for Economic Co-Operation (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) data analyzed by the 2008 Report. He urged participants to focus clearly on those 'whose educational needs are paramount', ending by advising participants that 'in our work to include the excluded, let us not forget the included'.

Subsequently, the other four EFA convening agencies and the World Food Programme gave their perspectives on the current state of EFA.

United Nations Development Programme

Mr Guido Schmidt-Traub, Team Leader, Millennium Development Goal Support Team, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), emphasized that education is an engine for social and economic development, stating that the EFA agenda is crucial for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Although a number of success stories show that some improvements have been made since 2000, some countries and regions, particularly in Africa, are at serious risk of not achieving the goals by 2015. The MDG Africa Steering Group, recently set up by the United Nations Secretary-General, has therefore an important role to play in giving prominence to good practice and proposing effective solutions. UNDP is very concerned by the lack of financial resources and is working with UNESCO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in providing support to countries for the preparation of sound and rigorous national EFA strategies. He concluded his statement by recalling the importance of including education in development strategies, especially Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

United Nations Children's Fund

After underlining the symbolic significance of gathering in Dakar at this key EFA mid-way point, Mr. Cream Wright, UNICEF Global Chief of Education, commended the leadership of UNESCO on 'what is perhaps the most challenging task of our times'. He

acknowledged the substantial progress achieved during the past seven years, noting, for example, that the FTI did not exist in 2000 and is now an omnipresent term in EFA discussions. He called upon EFA stakeholders to renew their commitments and to engage in bolder actions, notably in Africa and Asia where the highest percentage of countries are at risk of not achieving EFA by 2015, despite great initiatives taken by leaders on these continents. Mr Wright spoke about the challenges being faced, such as natural disasters, civil conflict, HIV/AIDS and droughts, also noting that in the face of these challenges, new opportunities continue to arise. He stressed the importance of curbing the disillusionment of teachers, learners and communities alike, mentioning the lack of focus on learning achievements and girls' empowerment. He reflected on the challenges of reaching out to excluded groups and ended by stating we should 'seize the opportunity to unleash what we call the magic of education on the people of this continent and the people of this world'.

The World Bank

Ms Joy Phumaphi, Vice President, Human Development Network, World Bank (WB), spoke on behalf of President Robert Zoellick. She assured participants that the WB remains deeply committed to EFA and underscored that the international community should be proud of the progress achieved thus far, notably in primary school enrolment and external aid for education. She quickly shifted to exploring the challenges that remain, noting that more than 70 million children are still unable to go to school and that the provision of a quality education remains an exception. She spoke about the 'collective responsibility' to address these challenges and expressed concern about the recent downturn of external support for education, as cited by the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report.

In order to reach the objective of its education strategy – learning opportunities for all children – Ms Phumaphi explained the two main lines of action focused on by the World Bank: (i) support to fragile states and programmes to enhance gender equity, and (ii) support for the improvement and measurement of education quality (teacher development, learning material and learning assessments, for instance). She equated primary education to a passport, noting that children must 'be able to travel once

they obtain this passport' and thus we must not lose focus on secondary and tertiary education. She concluded by underlining the fundamental necessity of implementing holistic, dynamic education systems, and reiterated the fact that a good quality education for all can make all the difference.

United Nations Population Fund

Delivered on behalf of Ms Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mr Boubacar Sow, Regional Director, insisted on the importance of education for human development. He spoke about the strong impact education has on people's well-being and empowerment, as well as the promotion of human rights and gender equality. He assured participants that UNFPA is committed to promoting the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. Girls' education is vital not only to reduce gender disparities and to ensure girls' empowerment but also to accelerate development as a whole, to increase economic activity, cut mortality rates, improve nutrition and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. As inequities and exclusion still remain, Mr Sow proclaimed that the top EFA priority for 2008 should focus on reducing gender gaps in primary and secondary education, and furthering literacy programmes, particularly for girls and excluded groups. While calling for increased investments for education in countries affected by conflict and disaster, UNFPA will strengthen the work undertaken in favour of EFA as well as its effective support to several ongoing education initiatives. 'Reaching the EFA goals will bring us closer to creating a better world for all', concluded Mr Sow.

World Food Programme

Ms Sheila Sisulu, Deputy Executive Director for Policy and External Affairs, made an intervention on behalf of Ms Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP). She began by pointing out three major EFA challenges to focus on in the coming years: gender parity, raising the quality of education (through the provision of healthy and safe learning environments, school nutrition and health programmes, better skilled and more motivated teachers, and relevant curricula) and the inclusion of excluded groups.

Ms Sisulu focused on the importance of nutrition programmes in reaching excluded learners and improving education quality. Poverty is one of the main factors leading to exclusion, as many families rely on their children to bring food to the table. Thus, many children must forgo school and begin working at a young age. Even with the reduction or abolition of school fees, the poorest populations need additional support; providing nutrition during the school day can help address some of their needs. While many governments include school feeding programmes in their education systems, Ms Sisulu noted that

approximately 59 million primary school age children in developing countries still attend school hungry. The implementation of school feeding programmes, as part of an essential package of complementary school health and nutrition interventions, is a key strategy. Ms Sisulu spoke about low-cost feeding programmes implemented by the WFP, where 10 cents a day is all that is necessary to provide a child with a nutritious meal at school. Ms Sisulu ended her statement by reiterating that EFA will not be achieved if children continue to attend school hungry.

Working Session I: Education for All by 2015 – Will we make it?

The aim of this session was to assess the significant progress to date towards achieving the EFA goals and to identify necessary priority actions to take in 2008. The *2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report; "Education for All by 2015: Will We Make It?"* was used as a key instrument to give evidence of the achievements thus far, at this crucial 2007 mid-way point, and to encourage the international community to accelerate its work towards fulfilling the EFA agenda. After welcoming the participants, the session's moderator, Ms Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education of South Africa, stressed the quality and relevance of the key findings in the *2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report* and emphasized the need for governments to develop sector-wide education policies and to formulate appropriate responses at all levels.

■ Key findings of the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report

Mr Keith Hinchliffe, Acting Director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report Team began his presentation of the Report's findings by stating that 'there has been much progress and many of the required changes are possible'. The Report identified four main fields of focus: follow-up of national governments' commitment to EFA, identification of the most significant progress and greatest remaining challenges, assessment of donors' support and policy priorities for 2008.

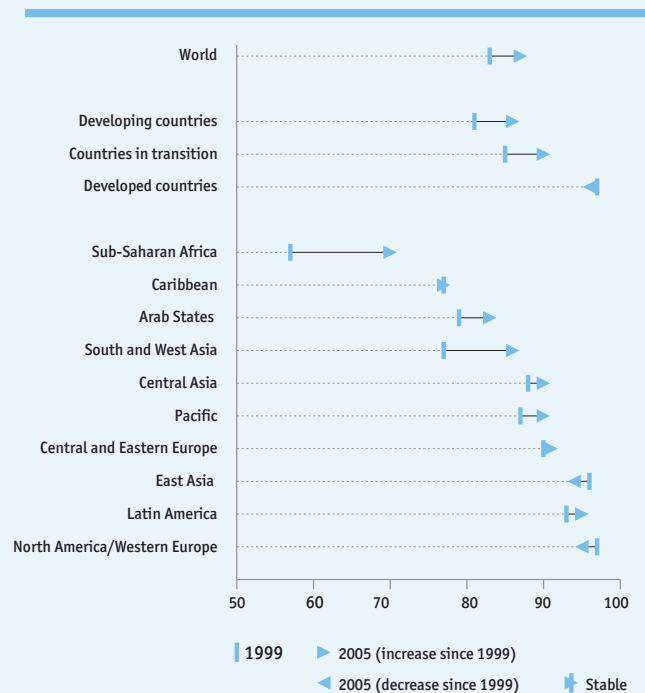
1. Major advances since Dakar

Major improvements since 1999 have been achieved in access to primary education, gender parity, net enrolment rates and education survival rates. In particular, tremendous increases in access were seen in sub-Saharan Africa (+36 per cent) and South and West Asia (+22 per cent). By 2005, 63 countries had achieved Universal Primary Education (UPE) worldwide while 28 countries had high chances of achieving the goal by 2015. The Report shows that in many countries the abolition of school fees helped foster primary school access for both boys and girls. With regard to gender parity, 17 countries were shown to have achieved this goal between 1999 and 2005, bringing the total to 67 per cent of countries (for which the Team has data) having achieved gender parity at the

primary level in 2005. Net enrolment rates of boys and girls have also increased since 1999, thus allowing for a significant decline of out-of-school children (from 96 to 72 million in 2005). Survival rates in school were also shown to have become of greater priority for national governments, through the establishment of learning assessments and other initiatives focused on providing greater quality of education.

The Report showed that financing of EFA, through both domestic and external resources has increased since 1999. Specifically, national spending on education as a share of Gross National Product (GNP) has increased and has had a strong impact on progress towards achieving UPE. Regarding external aid to education, the picture is more ambiguous: while the total aid to education increased sharply between 2000 and 2004, commitment in 2005 was distinctly lower than in 2004. Mr Hinchliffe acknowledged that the next few years will show whether this drop in aid simply reflected volatility or whether it signals a more serious situation.

Net Enrolment ratios in primary education, weighted average by region, 1999 and 2005



Source: 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report Summary. *Education for All by 2015: Will We Make It?*, Paris, UNESCO, p. 13.

2. Major concerns and prospects

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECC). In spite of its several benefits on children's well-being, ECCE still lacks attention from EFA stakeholders and thus remains a neglected EFA goal. The provision of ECCE programmes remains very limited in most developing countries, notably for children under the age of 3 as well as for the poorest and most disadvantaged groups.

Gender parity and adult literacy. Efforts to attain gender parity in primary education must now be shifted towards pursuing this goal in secondary education and thus towards ensuring the transition of students from primary to secondary level. According to the Report, prospects for this goal are rather pessimistic: only 59 countries were shown to have achieved gender parity in 2005 in both primary and secondary education, and 94 countries are seen as unlikely to reach the goal at the secondary level by 2015. Similarly, the progress made towards adult literacy remains very weak: 774 million people worldwide are still illiterate, 64 per cent of whom are women. The situation is even worse in sub-Saharan Africa where the number of illiterate adults has increased by almost 20 million people over the past ten years. Moreover, the Report shows that a small set of countries is particularly concerned by illiteracy: 75 per cent of illiterate people are concentrated in 15 countries.

Number of adult illiterates by region, 1985-2004 (million)

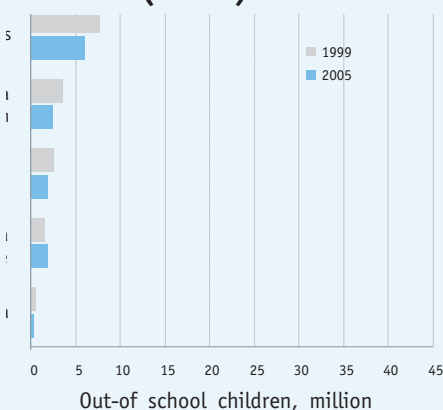


Figure developed by the Global Monitoring Report Team based on data in Table 2.15 of the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report; *Education for All by 2015: Will We Make It?*, Paris, UNESCO, p 63.

Quality. While the international community is calling for a quality education for all, the learning assessments carried out by governments depict low levels of learning achievement in developing countries. Despite the improvement of survival rates in primary cycles, these remain low, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (63 per cent) and South and West Asia (79 per cent), and require more attention from national governments. Different factors influence learning achievement: social and economic background, place of residence, access to textbooks, quantity and quality of instructional time, physical infrastructure and material resources. Teaching staff play a key role in the provision of quality education but teacher numbers have not kept pace with increases in enrolments, resulting in overcrowded classes and an undermining of the quality of learning. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) predicts that the achievement of UPE requires the training of 18 million additional primary teachers by 2015, with a maximum of 40 children per teacher.

Financing. Financing remains a concern, as the Report shows that some countries have reduced their share of GNP to education since 1999 and stresses a lack of predictability with respect to aid commitment to education. In a few instances, domestic resources allocated to education are less than 3 per cent of GNP and less than 10 per cent of total government spending. Furthermore, in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action, total aid to education should give priority both to sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia.

3. The way forward

The Report identifies five policy priorities for accelerating the achievement of the EFA goals: inclusion, quality, literacy, capacity development and financing. Interesting examples of policies, strategies and initiatives implemented in the past seven years are also outlined in the Report, and can be used as a basis for determining the next priority actions to take.

First and foremost, wider educational and social inclusion is required if all the EFA goals are to be met. Efforts must be made to strengthen the inclusion of excluded groups, such as reduction in or elimination of school fees, bilingual education, inclusive education for the disabled, enforcement of child labour

legislation and greater flexibility in learning modules. Second, higher quality instruction is necessary and could include the following four broad policy areas: trained and motivated teachers, effective teaching and learning strategies, learning time and material, and healthy and physically safe environments in schools. Third, emphasis on literacy should be enhanced through better learning opportunities for youth and adults by setting targets in national plans, strengthening the status of non-formal education and developing literate environments. Fourth, the promotion of capacity development at all levels of an education system is a great challenge. Last but not least, strong commitments for funding and other features of support are required to increase spending on education from governments, civil society and donors. This will enable a focus on aid to low income countries, fragile states, and countries that continue to make strong progress towards achieving the EFA agenda.

■ Perspectives

All participants expressed thanks to the Government of Senegal for hosting this important meeting and applauded the Global Monitoring Report Team for the excellent quality of the Report. A few countries remarked on the difficulty of accurately collecting data, and a discussion ensued on where exactly the Team gets its data. As recommended by Mr Nicholas Burnett, this discussion session focused on the key actions for 2008, with participants reaffirming their commitment to EFA and agreeing that, although significant progress can be seen, an acceleration of efforts is necessary in order to ensure the EFA goals are met by 2015. Four major themes for improving the achievement of EFA emerged from the discussion: adoption of a multi-sectoral approach to push forward the EFA agenda, a focus on equity and inclusion, the need for continued teacher development and the implementation of new financing patterns.

Multisectoral approach. Participants stressed that education is at the heart of development and is a long-term solution to poverty. Since global trends continue to affect education and impact the achievement of EFA, participants called for a multisectoral approach to achieving the EFA agenda that incorporates relevant policy issues in sectors such as health, nutrition, climate change, access to water and sanitation. By

exploring the linkages between these development sectors, competition for funding could be eliminated and progress in all sectors would ensue. A few participants specifically emphasized the need to provide nutrition in schools and underlined feeding programmes as important initiatives.

Equity and inclusion. One of the key EFA challenges in the coming years is to reach the 72 million children currently out of school. According to UNICEF, the figure rises to 93 million if we include children who are enrolled but not attending school. It is imperative that all EFA stakeholders work together to ensure the participation of excluded groups. Targeted measures must be developed by governments in cooperation with partners. Initiatives suggested by participants to accelerate progress in equity and inclusion are: income support to the poorest groups, disability assessment at an earlier age, mother-tongue education, inclusion of ECCE in basic education, and additional learning opportunities for disabled children and those affected by HIV/AIDS. In Kenya, for example, education in the mother-tongue is provided in the first three years of primary school to increase its relevance for communities. However, inclusive strategies need to be flexible and adapted to the local needs of excluded and marginalized groups.

Teacher development. This emerged as another critical challenge of quality education, notably since the Report predicts that 18 million additional primary school teachers will be required to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. Governments must therefore secure strong policies and funding for the employment, training and retention of teachers, supporting both pre-service and in-service programmes of teacher education, and provide didactical and pedagogical teaching material. This will enable unqualified teachers to obtain the skills they are lacking. Teacher salaries, compared to other professions, must also be addressed as a way of fostering career development and retention. In addition, governments should develop incentives to encourage teachers to serve longer in isolated areas.

New financing patterns. Many participants stated that the availability of more resources would enable them to make greater strides towards achieving the EFA agenda. The major financial concern of participants is the predictability of resources. Countries need to know the amount of aid they will

receive from partners in order to prepare coherent action plans. Thus, donors have to improve the stability and predictability of the aid they will provide to countries. New sources of funding were also cited as necessary to maximize resource mobilization. The international community should move beyond traditional OECD donors and facilitate financial support from emerging donors, particularly the private sector. Indeed, some potential donors who wish to invest in education do not have access to international mechanisms, such as the FTI, and are unable to contribute to education development. With

regard to financial approaches, participants discussed the following: increasing resources allocated to non-formal education, focusing on countries far from achieving EFA (in the context of the FTI Catalytic Fund) and centralizing resources at the regional level to allow for more effective distribution and management.

When asking: will we make it? My answer is: we have no choice but to do so! (South Africa)

The achievement of EFA does not only deal with political will but also with political courage. (France)

Working Session II: Reaching the unreached – What needs to be done to promote equity and inclusion, and address disparities within countries?

The purpose of this session was to identify strategies for enhancing equity and ensuring the inclusion of disadvantaged and excluded population groups. Mr Shaik Baksh, Minister of Education of Guyana and moderator of the session, stressed that equity and inclusion of the excluded are fundamental to ensuring that the right to education is a reality for all. Before giving the floor to panellists, he reminded all participants to focus their interventions on the inputs on equity and inclusion provided by the Working Group on EFA.

■ Nigeria: Addressing excluded groups through specific government programmes

The first panellist, Mr Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu, Minister of Education of Nigeria, focused his presentation on his country's experience with reaching excluded groups. His presentation drew upon five major national programmes that address universal basic education, gender equality, nomadic populations, adult education, and learners' special needs.

These programmes, through the establishment of specific funding mechanisms (such as the Universal Basic Education Fund and the Education Trust Fund) and building upon existing infrastructure and teacher-training programmes, foster access, equity, retention and quality education for challenged learners and excluded groups. By working alongside community groups and targeting specific subregions with greater gender disparities and higher populations of disadvantaged groups (especially girls and nomadic populations), the Nigerian government is using proven innovative approaches such as interactive radio instruction, e-learning, Braille press and specialized curriculum to provide education most relevant to these groups' immediate needs.

■ Global Campaign for Education: tackling disparities

Mr Kailash Satyarthi, Chairperson, Global Campaign for Education (GCE), began by expressing his thanks to the Government of Senegal for allowing young advocates from the GCE to deliver a moving message during the opening ceremony, on behalf of millions of

excluded children. Millions of children are deprived of the fundamental right to education, Mr Satyarthi said, proclaiming it to be 'the biggest human crime of our age and of today'. He cited data indicating that approximately 10 to 15 per cent of children are excluded from education throughout the world, including those in child labour, HIV/AIDS victims, street children, the disabled and those living in fragile states. He spoke about the international community being faced with the following five key deficits in the context of equity and inclusion: knowledge and data, capacity-building, social and cultural bias, adapted policies and funding. He urged national governments to develop a time-bound framework of action for inclusion by taking into consideration the aforementioned deficits.

Mr Satyarthi continued by suggesting a set of potential strategies and initiatives to 'reach the unreached'.

- ▷ Identification, categorization and mapping of the target groups and individuals.
- ▷ Implementation of more comprehensive and inclusive education policies supported by strong cooperation between ministries, local governments, international agencies and civil society organizations.
- ▷ Stronger enforcement of international conventions and legal commitments, particularly those dealing with child labour, and minimum working age and school entry age.
- ▷ Adoption of inclusive financing frameworks (by the FTI and other donor agencies).
- ▷ Support and dissemination of innovative methods and good practices.

■ Perspectives

Mr Baksh emphasized the urgent need for the implementation of an inclusive agenda. He asked that the discussion session focus on sharing experiences and proposals of strategies for inclusive policies. Three main inclusive issues emerged from the

ensuing deliberations: mapping of excluded groups, measures targeted to address specific challenges and funding. Throughout the dialogue, while participants unanimously agreed on the necessity to adopt both top-down and bottom-up approaches, the latter were particularly emphasized as a way of ensuring higher involvement of communities, local governments, civil society and parents. In addition, it was suggested that the enforcement of a national statutory provision on the right to compulsory education would foster the process toward equity and inclusion for all children. While the right to compulsory education is fundamental, a few countries, notably South Africa, questioned the benefit of allocating funds to all on a statutory basis, arguing that priority must be given to the poorest first.

Mapping. As recommended by the Working Group on EFA, participants recognized the mapping of excluded and disadvantaged groups as a crucial strategy for success. In order to implement targeted measures in favour of excluded groups, national governments should effectively identify these groups, establish their most pressing needs and better understand why they are excluded. As local stakeholders often work directly with these excluded populations, national governments should strengthen their consultation with communities and local stakeholders to obtain an accurate overview of the current situation and challenges. Moreover, cooperation with civil society needs to be increased, particularly in the framework of mapping methods and participative research models to be used alongside statistical systems.

Targeted measures. The implementation of inclusive policies must result in the development of more targeted measures for excluded groups, particularly for those in hard-to-reach areas. A broad range of individuals—such as disabled children, street children, working children, ethnic minorities, indigenous communities, nomadic people, girls, mothers, and others—remain excluded from education and require initiatives tailored to their specific needs. Particular emphasis was placed on fostering gender equity and girls' empowerment, notably in rural areas where girls may find themselves in less favorable conditions due to early marriages and pregnancies, housework and other social traditions undermining their access to and retention in school. The poverty of parents was

cited as a major factor leading to exclusion and it was suggested that governments should pay greater attention to the economic protection of women and should encourage them to send their children to school. Suggested examples and proposals of targeted measures were the following:

- ▷ Financial incentives by the government: free learning material and textbooks, scholarships, feeding programmes, provision of free transportation and hostel facilities for children in remote areas
- ▷ Development of 'community/children/girl-friendly schools' programmes
- ▷ School facilities that enable the access of disabled children
- ▷ Provision of qualified teachers who take the needs of excluded children into account (mother-tongue education, use of sign language, etc.)
- ▷ Implementation of gender-sensitive curricula
- ▷ Participation of parents in school

'I wanted to go to school and to learn, but how?' (Young advocate from GCE)

'They are deprived of the fundamental right to education. To me this is biggest human crime of our age, and of today.' (Global Campaign for Education)

'Once we are successful in answering the question of exclusion and ensuring equity in the provision of quality, relevant and functional education, we shall be on course in the achievement of EFA.' (Nigeria)

Financing. The marginal cost of including excluded children is much higher than others. As a result, the implementation of inclusive policies—through the aforementioned measures—requires additional financing efforts from governments, funding mechanisms and donor agencies. It is as imperative for countries to increase their education budget and provide more domestic resources to inclusive policies as it is for the FTI and donor agencies to adopt inclusive frameworks that take into account the needs of excluded groups.

Working Session III: Quality makes the difference – Next steps to improve quality of education

Ms Joy Phumaphi, Vice President, Human Development Network, World Bank, moderated this session and opened it by calling for a focus on what next steps are necessary to ensure quality education. Current indicators for measuring quality include examining survival rates, teacher/pupil ratios and the availability of textbooks, among others. She spoke about the need to ensure 'accountability of ourselves and various stakeholders' and to develop interventions that target the right groups of students (those with disabilities, girls, women, minorities, etc.). She stated that establishing standards and monitoring them continuously is needed 'to enable all children to achieve their learning potential'.

■ Indonesia: a comprehensive approach

Mr Bambang Soedibyo, Minister of Education of Indonesia, spoke about the three pillars of the Indonesian national education policy: quality, relevance and competitiveness. He presented a thorough case study of the Indonesian comprehensive approach to education, a model that is replicated throughout the 32 Indonesian provinces, including both primary and secondary school. He spoke at length about the 12 programmes that seek to standardize curriculum content, infrastructure, quality assurance, national classroom examinations and teacher qualifications. Mr Soedibyo ended his presentation by encouraging other leaders to visit Indonesia and to gain first-hand experience as to how this model is put into practice.

■ Haiti: defining quality of education

Mr Gabriel Bien-Aimé, Minister of National Education and Vocational Training of Haiti, focused his presentation on the factors that define a quality education, stating that beyond greater academic learning, quality education refers to an education of relevance (taking into account specific countries, regions, social and political factors) that keeps all learners competitive and helps spread notions of peace and tolerance. He called for a re-doubling of efforts and greater investment in the following: national education standards, quality assurance programmes, national examinations, accreditation, teachers' qualifications and competencies, infrastructure and

facilities, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and international research publications. These efforts specifically call for increased security and hygiene of facilities, ensuring relevant teaching materials and curriculum (including mother tongue teaching), reasonable teacher/pupil ratios and adequate nutrition for students.

Mr Bien-Aimé explained that, in Haiti, a new teaching-training programme is being prepared that focuses on attracting graduates to the teaching profession and retaining them. He stressed that countries beset by conditions of fragility, such as Haiti, face many logistical challenges and need more specific support, and that the merits of alternative programmes (such as the abolition of school fees, implementation of school feeding programmes, and the 'One laptop per child' initiative) should continue to be discussed in the international community.

■ Perspectives

The ensuing discussion covered many of the same topics, with countries re-affirming their support for measures to increase quality education in all regions of the world. Mr Burnett spoke about the McKinsey report that tried to assess why certain countries such as Finland and Singapore have such high quality teachers, by examining the profile of teachers, including their background and training.

Opportunity cost. As one participant mentioned 'quality is priceless and the cost to achieve it is very low', especially in comparison with the opportunity cost of not pushing quality forward in all regions of the world.

Community involvement. Community involvement was depicted as a way to help stabilize the overall education experience of students (be it at home or school) and to encourage students to continue to go to school, as well as to encourage parents to allow them this opportunity. This is especially important for countries facing major social and political disruptions. The early childhood care centres in rural parts of Senegal, *La Case des Tout-Petits*, were cited as a strong model.

Teacher training mobilization. Every participant reinforced the notion that investing in teachers (notably in their professional development, salaries and employment conditions) is of utmost importance and of top priority if we are to collectively achieve quality education. This investment should help motivate teachers and address issues of teacher migration, notably ensuring rural areas do not face teacher shortages and lack of teaching materials. One participant suggested that incentives are needed beyond teachers and must include school managers, and that implementing free boarding and feeding programmes for the adults running the local education systems would facilitate better school management.

Wider perspective. A few participants stressed the need to look at quality from a new perspective, not just from the point of view of standardized testing

but really focused on the learners' needs. The importance of analysing the internal and external school environment was stressed, as well as its impact on learners in the context of the wider community and their everyday lives. For example, malaria education is necessary in areas of prevalence.

Multisectoral approach. It was heard repeatedly that quality is a multi-dimensional issue that faces many challenges and thus a holistic approach incorporating the health and security of the learning environment is necessary to begin to address improvements.

'In some schools you find there is one book for ten students! Teachers and students try, but it's very hard for them.' (Burkina Faso)

'Mere achievement testing without curriculum renewal is not meaningful.' (India)

Working Session IV: Resource mobilization and its effective use – What needs to change?

After strong growth up to 2004, aid to education registered a substantial decline in 2005. In the meantime, governments are facing increased education demands. These patterns set new challenges for the coming years with regard to ensuring that financing mechanisms are appropriate and adequate for achieving the EFA agenda by 2015. Ms Lisbeth Rugtvedt, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway, moderated the session on exploring resource mobilization and urged the international community to maintain the current funding momentum. Ministries of Finance must be aware that education is an engine for development and a long-term investment for stronger economic growth. In accordance with the Working Group discussion points, Ms Rugtvedt underlined that priority should be given to countries in greatest need and to excluded groups.

To allow for a more focused discussion on potential funding strategies, High-Level Group participants divided into two subgroups focused on Financing the neglected goals of EFA: ECCE, ongoing learning programmes and adult literacy) and on Financing EFA: domestic and external resources.

■ Financing the neglected goals of EFA

Participants in this subgroup on financing neglected EFA goals focused mostly on addressing ECCE and literacy. The moderator, Ms Margaret Sitta, Minister of Education and Vocational Training of the United Republic of Tanzania, spoke often about ECCE and stressed the need for integrated programmes as a way to ensure that children have inoculations, access to social welfare and teachers qualified for pre-primary education. Major challenges cited include children being ready when they attend primary school (knowing how to learn), schools not being adequately prepared to receive students and the lack of parental involvement. As one participant mentioned, if we spend too much time getting children outside of homes and into schools, these children will be prepared for school but alienated from their families and communities later on.

The African Development Bank (ADB) introduced the idea of establishing evening centres for education accommodating parents and their young children. This notion was readily approved by the vast majority

of participants, who elaborated on the best manner to maximize its level of outreach and its positive benefits. It was noted that providing literacy classes alongside early childhood care would be extremely beneficial, especially if they incorporate lessons on caring for young children. In this way, the centres would be cost-effective and would encourage parents to pursue lifelong learning, teaching parents how to stimulate children so that they are prepared for primary school entrance (through games, songs, toy-making, etc.), and promoting the importance of education in the home. The latter would hopefully have an effect on the overall community and encourage reluctant parents of older children to allow their children to continue to attend school.

Some participants thought funding for early childhood care and education and for adult literacy should be specific line items in government budgets, with distinct amounts of money that cannot be spent elsewhere. It was agreed that governments must be responsible for leading these programmes, albeit with the help and guidance of communities and the private sector. Commitment, it was said, is the underlying factor, and commitment from governments can only occur if there is a policy mandate. However, in pushing these programmes forward, it is necessary to ensure that the responsibility and role of parents in fostering early childhood education are not readily dismissed and responsibility solely handed over to governments.

The Kenyan representative quoted a common local saying: ‘your piece of cloth, although small, must be stretched over the part of the body you need to cover’.

Various models of early childhood care that incorporate parents and the wider community were cited. Senegal’s *La Case des Tout-Petits* was cited, as were early childhood care centres in South Africa. It is important to note that both of these programmes rely heavily on external funding. It was also noted that Kenya and Zimbabwe have integrated early childhood care centres into existing primary schools, provided by the government alongside private partners, thus taking advantage of existing facilities and established school management policies.

A controversial idea focused on the creation of a special fund for neglected EFA goals. This fund could be either within the FTI or in another manner, developed at next year’s High-Level Group meeting

and administered through UNESCO and UNICEF. This idea was not met with wide enthusiasm; the majority of participants felt that creating a parallel fund would detract from pushing forward the whole EFA agenda and instead prioritize certain goals at the exclusion of promoting others. It was readily agreed that the EFA goals must be looked at holistically, and that utilizing and integrating existing policies and infrastructure should be examined in a more in-depth manner before spending time, energy and funding on creating separate programmes.

It was suggested that too much emphasis on primary education could lead to additional problems with secondary education. While focusing on ECCE and adult literacy, we need to ensure that older children continue to receive education, either in formal or non-formal ways.

■ Domestic and external resources

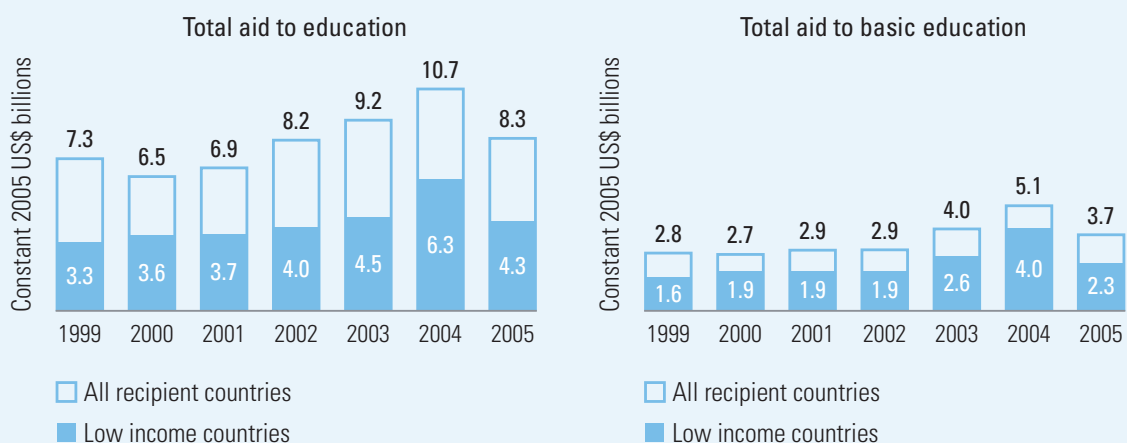
Mr Jean Christophe Deberre, Director of Development Policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, moderated this subgroup on domestic and external resources. He began the session by citing a fundamental sentence from the Dakar Framework for Action adopted in 2000: ‘...no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources (para. 10)’. He identified three essential topics for

discussion during this sub-group: volume, targeting, and efficiency of financing.

Since 2000, countries have made substantial efforts to increase their national education budgets. Two main factors influence the volume of these budgets: economic growth to generate financial margins and increased tax revenues. Regarding external resources, the expansion of donors’ commitments is proving to be more and more difficult, and the adoption of numerical standards (such as the standards of Official Development Assistance (ODA) mentioned in the discussion points of the Working Group on EFA) would be an opportunity to make the volume of aid more predictable.

Mr Deberre recognized the difficulty for governments to avoid imbalance in financing certain subsectors within overall education funding. Individual countries have national priorities according to specific challenges and opportunities, and both domestic and external resources should be allocated accordingly. Mr Deberre also emphasized the contradiction between an annual budgetary cycle, which has an impact on domestic policies, and the will for multi-year funding (intended to make commitments more sustainable). In order to make the allocation of resources more efficient, we need to find ways to ensure that the conditions of fragility faced by various countries are given more consistent and coherent attention from donors. In that sense, it is essential to focus on the most difficult situations.

Total aid commitments to education and to basic education, 1999–2005



Source: 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report; Education for All by 2015: Will We Make It?, Paris, UNESCO, p. 156.

■ Perspectives

Participants affirmed their political will to make financing more predictable and sustainable in terms of volume and quality, and acknowledged that they must now fulfil their commitments, underpinned by the Dakar Framework for Action, the Paris Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus. Participants reflected on ways to improve financing patterns and to overcome persistent obstacles. Calls for additional efforts to increase the volume of aid were heard, as well as the urgent need to replenish the FTI Catalytic Fund. Although the discussion was rather fragmented, a consensus was reached on three potential strategies: adoption of a holistic approach, more sustainable and predictable allocation of resources, and the need for targeted funding focused on priorities.

Holistic approach. Most participants called for a more balanced approach to education funding in order to achieve all the EFA goals. National governments and donors need to pay adequate attention not only to basic education but also to secondary and higher education. In addition, as development sectors are interconnected and investments in one sector have an impact on others, many participants emphasized the need for an overall balanced approach between development sectors, specifically mentioning issues related to health, water and agriculture. Moreover, it was suggested that the achievement of the EFA goals relies heavily on the realization of the MDGs and thus a sustainable model ensuring the promotion of both MDGs and the EFA agenda should be developed. If we want to succeed in education it is essential we also forecast sector-wide financing assessments and work in close cooperation with PRSPs, in which the visibility of education policies must be strengthened.

More predictability and sustainability.

Predictability of funding remains a major challenge for financing EFA, but education policies require mid- and long-term commitments to be truly sustainable. If national governments are unaware of the exact amount of aid they will receive from donors, they do are hampered in developing comprehensive overall education sector plans.

Targeting priorities. Participants outlined the importance of financing priority targets. These encompass capacity-building as well as fragile states and excluded groups.

- ▷ **Capacity-building:** better national capacities will lead to better mobilization and more effective usage of resources. An efficient and transparent system of financial management is essential. Moreover, the reinforcement of statistical institutions is crucial in providing accurate data and assessments of progress to enhance the output of the EFA goals.
- ▷ **Fragile states and excluded groups:** in order to use domestic and external resources more effectively, they need to be allocated to priority countries and population groups. In many instances, resource allocation is irrational; it is not always provided to those countries with the greatest need and excluded children are often not addressed by national governments. The international community should seek to prioritize aid to fragile states, countries that are far from achieving the MDGs and the EFA goals, and the most excluded population groups. It was agreed that conflict and post-conflict countries require greater attention from donors, and more funding efforts fostering the inclusion of girls and those with disabilities are necessary by national governments.

Distribution of benefits of public spending on education to poorest and richest households in selected countries

	All education		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%
Sub-Saharan Africa (10 countries)	12.8	32.7	17.8	18.4	7.4	38.7	5.2	54.4
Asia and Pacific (4 countries)	12.4	34.8	20.3	16.9	8.3	37.3	2.5	69.0
Middle East and North Africa (2 countries)	15.3	24.1	24.7	12.4	11.0	24.4	4.0	46.9
Transition countries (7 countries)	15.3	24.0	19.3	20.0	12.5	24.6	8.7	32.6

Source: Davoodi et al. (2003), Table 2.

Source: 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report; Education for All by 2015: Will We Make It?, Paris, UNESCO, p. 149.

Participants re-convened in plenary to discuss the outcomes and deliberations within the subgroups. They emphasized the need for real commitment, demonstrated by external financing, and not just statements of political will.

Government responsibility. Many speakers stressed the importance of governments having primary responsibility for funding education programmes, be they ECCE, primary or secondary.

Synergy. Beyond prioritization of the EFA goals, it was said that synergies between goals must be examined, in order to develop holistic approaches that reach the most groups possible. This will alleviate certain choices of prioritization that governments are often faced with and may help push forward certain countries which are making great progress, yet not quite keeping on pace with achieving the EFA agenda. Synergy between the FTI and High-Level Group meetings was also discussed, to allow for maximum knowledge sharing.

'Everything is a priority' means achieving nothing, and a fog of confusion.'
(South Africa)

'We need change and waiting for it to happen would be a disservice to our children.' (Norway)

Working Session V: The way forward: priorities for 2008

The final working session provided an opportunity to outline directions for the coming year and what participants hope to have achieved by the time the 2008 High-Level Group meeting takes place in Oslo. Mr Nicholas Burnett, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, led the session, noting that political will plays a key role in maintaining the EFA momentum. Given the emphasis currently placed on financing, he mentioned the importance of establishing linkages with the annual International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) (Yokohama, 28 to 30 May 2008). He acknowledged frustrations related to the visibility of EFA, specifically calling for a strengthening of outreach to both internal and external audiences, in order to communicate the achievements of regions, countries and the whole EFA movement.

■ The final session: the High-Level Group communiqué

After lunch, during which a final draft of the communiqué was prepared through extensive discussions among members of the International Advisory Panel on EFA, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura presided over a session to finalize the communiqué, guiding it towards consensus and adoption. This discussion was characterized by a long and intense debate, notably pertaining to the section on Financing and the commitments outlined in *The Way Forward*. A number of modifications were made to the text; the amended version was adopted, accepted unanimously in most instances and by majority consensus on a few key points. The agreed version is found in the Appendix.

■ Perspectives

The discussion that followed provided an opportunity for comments on the High-Level Group process as a whole. Many participants agreed with the call for better visibility of EFA initiatives, especially success stories about progress and innovation that encourage countries, donors and the general public to maintain strong momentum. A number of participants expressed the need to focus future discussions on the manner in which to support the whole child, including the health, welfare and status of the learner. This includes financing mechanisms to address HIV and

AIDS, malaria and other epidemics, and acknowledging the impact they have on education systems and learners. One participant regretted the lack of discussion about the Global Action Plan.

In conclusion, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura took the floor and spoke about the need for strengthened cooperation among the five convening agencies on EFA, stating that current global coordination remains insufficient. He stressed the importance of donor countries keeping promises and ended the session by saying that UNESCO alone cannot take charge of communicating EFA activities and that a strong communication strategy that includes all EFA countries and partners must be developed. He thanked Senegal for its cooperation and support in High-Level Group meeting, and expressed his thanks to Norway for its invitation to host the 2008 meeting in Oslo on 16 to 18 December 2008.

In his closing remarks, the Senegalese Minister of Education, Mr Moustapha Sourang, expressed his satisfaction with the quality of debate during the meeting, particularly highlighting the symbolic importance of hosting this meeting in Dakar, at the midway point between 2000 and 2015. He concluded by stating that he is convinced that by working together, alongside UNESCO, we can have confidence that the EFA agenda is achieved in a timely manner.

■ Postscript

After seven meetings, there is a familiar feel about the High-Level Group, with a number of abiding themes. Whichever part of the EFA agenda is being addressed, the perennial question of priorities raises its head. This is particularly sharply focused in discussions on funding, especially external funding. Once again, the fundamental principle from the original Dakar meeting that countries should receive the support they need when they are serious about EFA was quoted, but, once again also, it resulted in little progress in terms of new and long-term commitments.

This year the cross-cutting issues of the neglected EFA goals and support to countries facing conditions of fragility gave another opportunity to revisit priorities. These issues did indeed crop up in a number of sessions, informing debate on equity and financing particularly. If there were no clear conclusions to address these areas in new ways, it was perhaps

because there is a need for further reflection about innovative strategies. What was perfectly clear, however, was the recognition that both the neglected EFA goals and fragility cover large groups of people who currently have inadequate access to quality basic education: young children, out-of-school and de-schooled young people, displaced and disempowered victims of conflict or disaster, or unschooled adults. It is this focus on the people behind the issues that will in the end lead to new action.

On the whole, the 2007 High-Level Group worked towards a clearer set of priorities for 2008 and beyond. This was due in large measure to the new sequence of EFA meetings which meant that the EFA

Working Group, meeting a month earlier, provided a sound analysis of the evidence and messages of the most recent *2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report*. This new confluence of evidence, reflection, negotiation and articulation strengthened the sense that current progress and challenges do indeed shape the priorities of the future.

Members of the High-Level Group are only too aware of the need to strengthen its impact through a stronger expression of political will. This concern, which will drive efforts in organizing subsequent meetings, becomes all the more urgent as the 2015 deadline moves inexorably closer.

Appendices

Appendix I: Communiqué from the Seventh Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All

1. *We, Ministers, senior officials of multilateral and bilateral agencies, and leaders of civil society, met in Dakar (Senegal), from 11 to 13 December 2007 at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO and the government of Senegal, and we express our sincere thanks to our hosts for their warm hospitality. At the halfway point between 2000 and 2015, the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) presented an overview of progress towards the six EFA goals, and a projection of current trends up to 2015. We noted the significant progress – and commend countries for their committed action – in primary education, and positive though uneven developments on the other goals, and welcomed the presentation of a range of good practices offering examples of responses to the challenges of reaching the most marginalized groups. We are now in a position to know better what works in basic education, but the current pace of progress is not sufficient to meet the 2015 target.*
2. *We noted with concern that three EFA goals – on early childhood care and education (ECCE), learning opportunities for youth and adults, and adult and youth literacy – are neglected and agreed that we must redouble our efforts to ensure they are attended to. Our deliberations focused on three interconnected issues, namely, inclusion, the quality of education, and meeting the financing needs of EFA. We also agreed that attention must be given to EFA progress in countries facing conditions of fragility.*
3. *We agreed that priority attention will be given to the following three critical and interconnected issues in 2008 and beyond.*
 - a) *Undertake a mapping to determine more precisely the characteristics of excluded groups, their circumstances and needs and thus inform more inclusive educational policies. This mapping could also:*
 - i. *Use household and other such surveys as sources of detailed quantitative and qualitative data;*
 - ii. *Empower communities by engaging them fully in identifying the excluded and vulnerable in their societies;*
 - iii. *Identify steps to strengthen and harmonize, where necessary, the legislative framework within which the right to education is guaranteed;*
 - iv. *Include a costing of what is needed to reach marginalized groups effectively;*
 - v. *Foster coordination at local, regional and national levels and across sectors, promoting more inclusive policies in order to mobilize schools and their communities.*
 - b) *Improve policy frameworks to address post-primary learning opportunities for in-school and out-of-school youth which will:*
 - i. *Take an integrated approach to secondary education and other learning programmes for those transitioning from primary schooling;*
 - ii. *Provide equitable access to quality opportunities, including non-formal education, for literacy learning, technical and vocational education and training, and life-skills programmes;*
 - iii. *Address the complexity of providing diversified learning opportunities.*

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

4. *We recognized that achieving the EFA goals means reaching those children, youth and adults, especially girls and women, who have hitherto been excluded from basic education opportunities. Situations of disaster and conflict, in particular, have robbed many young people and adults of basic education, adding to the challenge of providing access to literacy, numeracy and life-skills. In order to ensure greater equity and inclusion, we propose the following actions during 2008 and beyond, to be led by governments at country level, in partnership with civil society and other stakeholders, and with the support of international partners:*

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5. *We affirm that it is both access to education and its quality that make a difference to the life chances of the learner and that the pursuit of quality is integral to the achievement of the six EFA goals. Quality is multi-dimensional, requiring a set of interlinked investments. To promote quality, we propose the following actions during 2008 and beyond by national governments with the assistance of their EFA partners:*

- a) *Take a comprehensive and results-oriented approach to addressing quality in policy formulation, programme management and implementation, and evaluation, giving due attention to the quality of teaching and learning (such as curriculum, pedagogy, languages of instruction, materials, ICTs, school management, infrastructure...) and the necessary measures to ensure the readiness of the learner (such as safety, security and peace, health, nutrition, respect of gender, response to disabilities, ECCE...).*
- b) *Develop a policy framework regarding teachers, which comprehensively addresses:*
- i. *The need to train and recruit large numbers of teachers, with an emphasis on female teachers in regions where they are under-represented (18 million at primary level worldwide by 2015, with almost 4 million needed in sub-Saharan Africa);*
 - ii. *Quality initial and in-service training that balances content and pedagogical method;*
 - iii. *The need for enhanced status and a clear path of career development for teachers which aims to strengthen their professional competence, and for incentives to retain them in the system;*
 - iv. *Employment practices that protect the rights and professional status of teachers;*
 - v. *Equitable deployment of teachers to rural, urban and remote areas.*
- c) *Strive for gender equity and equality in the education sector through sharing good practices and promoting gender-based analysis.*
- d) *Promote capacity development for school management, including supervision and support, organizational development, financial management and collaboration with the community.*
- e) *Track and evaluate the definition and development of standards of learning achievement and the measurement of learning outcomes.*
- f) *Undertake impact evaluations of policies and investments with a view to improving learning outcomes and feeding into future policy development.*
- g) *Improve the quality, relevance and effectiveness of youth and adult literacy and non-formal education programmes, especially for women.*

FINANCING

6. *Domestic resources typically account for most of the education budget, and their share in national income has increased in a majority of developing countries since 2000. In resource-poor countries, external aid is critical in supporting national efforts. We are extremely concerned about the decline in external aid commitments to education in 2005 in light of the Gleneagles G8 Summit of that year and in the perspective of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. We also deplore the fact that aid commitments remain well below the estimated annual external funding requirements of US\$11 billion. We are determined to work to maintain and increase levels of funding to education in general and to basic education in particular. Increased external financing must be met with genuine political will and increased capacity across the sector, at all levels, not only in terms of quality input but also to ensure efficient and effective use of resources. To this end, we re-affirm our commitment to the Dakar pledge that no country seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in its efforts because of a lack of resources, and we propose the following actions during 2008 and beyond:*
- a) *National and local governments should mobilize sufficient domestic resources in accordance with indicative standards (~6% of GNI / 15-20% of government budget) in allocations to education, with a prioritization of basic education (>3% of GNI / 10% of government budget);*
 - b) *External funding partners should raise levels of predictable and long-term financing to education in general and to basic education in particular. External financing should pay particular attention to the timely flow of resources, and to filling the funding gap of FTI-endorsed education sector plans;*
 - c) *Governments and EFA partners should support costing exercises that facilitate investment options in all education sub-sectors (from ECCE through basic, secondary and adult education), taking into*

consideration a more integrated approach and building more efficiently on existing resources within education and other sectors (health, social services);

- d) *Governments should strive to ensure that no child is excluded from school because of the financial burden, including the removal or reduction of user fees where appropriate, and give support to the poorest households and other excluded groups, for example through cash transfers, school feeding or subsidies;*
- e) *Governments and external funding partners should seek to optimize the financing opportunities available through the multiple channels of external funding to basic education, the relationship between them, and their relative impact on progress towards the EFA goals, in the context of the commitments made in the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;*
- f) *EFA partners should prioritize low-income countries, fragile, emergency and conflict-affected states, and sub-Saharan Africa.*

THE WAY FORWARD

7. We commit ourselves to:

- a) *Raise the profile of EFA in development, as a human right and as a fundamental tool in economic growth and poverty reduction, by:*
 - i. *Providing conceptual input to relevant events on the inter-connections and interdependence of EFA with global issues such as the MDGs, climate change, sustainable development and public health;*

- ii. *Working for the inclusion of all EFA priorities on the agendas of other global and regional development meetings, such as Financing for Development, G8, TICAD IV, the World Bank and IMF semi-annual meetings, MDG processes, and other such events;*
- iii. *Enhancing international commitment to basic education through stronger linkages between EFA and the agendas of education-related meetings in 2008, such as the E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting, ADEA meetings, and the International Conference on Education, which will also provide input into the next meeting of the High-Level Group;*
- iv. *Providing input into the ongoing discussions on aid effectiveness, based on experience in the education sector, as part of the Paris Declaration processes, in particular in preparation for the High-Level Forum on aid effectiveness to be held in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008.*

b) Maintain the political momentum on EFA by

- i. *Continuing to foster the full engagement and coordinated action of multiple stakeholders through the Working Group on EFA, FTI, the International Advisory Panel (IAP) and the High-Level Group, and by applying the EFA Global Action Plan;*
- ii. *Increasing the visibility of EFA to a wider public and in the media through a stronger and more pro-active communications strategy;*
- iii. *Monitoring the implementation of the actions proposed in this Communiqué, as part of the next meeting of the EFA High-Level Group; we are pleased to accept the invitation of the government of Norway to meet in Oslo from 16 to 18 December 2008.*

Appendix II: Opening Address of the Director-General of UNESCO



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

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

Opening Address of the Director-General of UNESCO

Dakar, Senegal, 11 December 2007

Distinguished Presidents,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with very great pleasure and not without some emotion that I am here today in Dakar for this seventh meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All.

Being here with you today, Mr President, is a measure of the progress that has been made since seven-and-a-half years ago, when we were both seated on this same podium, in April 2000, and the international community committed itself, together with 164 participating countries, to pursuing the famous "six Dakar goals" of education for all (EFA).

I would first of all like to extend my sincerest thanks to you, Mr President, and to the Senegalese Government and people, for your warm welcome and your legendary hospitality, "teranga".

I would also like to greet wholeheartedly President Touré of Mali. Only three months ago, I inaugurated, in his presence, at Bamako, the Regional Conference on Literacy in Africa. His presence today attests to his unfailing support for the EFA goals and his exemplary determination.

I am also particularly satisfied that, for the first time, young people can make their voice heard from this podium. It is indeed essential to define the future path to follow, while taking fully into account not only the vision and the needs but also the hopes of the young generations.

Our gathering together again in Dakar is a credit to us, but it also binds us. It compels us to assess our practical achievements at the mid-way point to the 2015 target date. It compels us to reaffirm, and assess objectively, the partnership between governments, civil society and donors to which we are all committed.

This meeting had to take place on African soil because Africa is a priority for UNESCO and the United Nations system at large. For this reason the Secretary-General of the United Nations has launched the initiative aimed at speeding up the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. UNESCO is responsible, in cooperation with the World Bank and UNICEF, for the coordination of the education thematic group, and be assured that I shall see to it that our Organization will discharge its obligations to the satisfaction of all.

Although the most rapid progress since 2000 has been made in sub-Saharan Africa, it is also this region which remains farthest from the Dakar goals, according to the 2008 edition of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Seven years after the World Education Forum, there are real changes on the world map of basic education.

As the 2008 *EFA Global Monitoring Report* states, there are more children in school than ever before. The pace of change has been faster than in the 1990s. Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed the most rapid increase. The number of children entering primary school rose by 36% between 1999 and 2005. This has happened through deliberate efforts by governments to make the right to education a reality.

This trend is positively benefiting girls: 75% of countries have achieved, or nearly achieved, the gender parity goal in primary education. The picture is not as bright at secondary level, where much still needs to be done. The goal of gender equality will likewise remain elusive without profound changes within education systems and societies at large.

Every additional child in school is a step forward for EFA. The number of out-of-school children has dropped by 24 million since 1999. But this still leaves an unacceptably high number of children not in school – currently estimated at 72 million. Equally as serious are the problems of irregular attendance, dropout and grade repetition.

These problems are particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa. While the number of out-of-school children has fallen dramatically since 2000, the region still accounts for 45% of the world total.

Therefore, while there remains a long way to go to achieve universal primary education (goal 2) and gender parity (goal 5), there are strong trends in the right direction. The picture for the other goals, however, is less positive.

Adult literacy (goal 4) has been seriously neglected, leaving one in five adults deprived of the most basic tools to improve their livelihoods and participate in society. The fact that in this 21st century 774 million adults still cannot read or write is, as the GMR states, “a global disgrace”.

There is a crying need for relevant learning programmes aimed at young people and adults (goal 3).

Finally, learning starts well before primary school. The fact that so few young children from poor families have access to early childhood care and education (goal 1) limits enormously their chances of breaking out of poverty.

Poor education quality is also undermining progress towards EFA. Quality (goal 6) urgently needs greater attention: investment in teachers, classrooms and textbooks is imperative to assure that children acquire basic literacy, numeracy and life skills. Failure to do so not only makes for inefficient education systems. It acts as a major brake on individual, social and economic development.

I mention these facts not as a discouragement, but rather as a call to redouble and re-orient our efforts.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The experience of the past seven years has shown us what are the key requirements for EFA progress.

Determined national commitment is the foundation for success. This means making basic education a priority for national development and growth. It calls for a comprehensive national education plan that is well funded

from domestic sources and well supported by external aid. We also know that aid is most effective when it is aligned with national priorities.

Countries where this kind of determination and support exist have registered real progress. What we need is to have these elements firmly rooted in yet more countries.

We have come a long way since Dakar 2000.

The international scene, in particular, is much more conducive today to achieving EFA than it was in the late 1990s.

We knew, when we met in Dakar ten years after Jomtien, that we could not fail again. Efforts were therefore made to set up a new structure, under the coordination of UNESCO, to drive EFA forward. These efforts have paid off. A number of conditions are now in place, which did not exist in the 1990s, that support EFA progress. Let me mention three.

First, EFA has become a truly multistakeholder endeavour. All four main constituencies are now engaged: national governments; donors; multilateral agencies; and civil society.

Since 2000, civil society, especially, has become much more involved at every level. This includes the private sector, which has significantly strengthened its engagement with EFA processes, for example through the “Partnership for Education”, a joint initiative of UNESCO and the World Economic Forum.

In addition, the development of the EFA Global Action Plan has given renewed impetus to achieving more coordinated action among the original five convening agencies.

Second, the international architecture has evolved considerably.

Shortly after Dakar 2000, the world’s governments adopted the Millennium Development Goals as a framework for international development. The fact that two of the EFA goals – universal primary education and gender equality – were included among the MDGs has raised the profile of basic education and made more explicit the link between EFA and poverty reduction.

However, let me underscore that achieving the MDGs relies upon the realization of all six EFA goals. Education gives people knowledge and skills to improve their lives and to make informed decisions. Only by providing quality basic education for all – children, youth and adults – can we achieve our development agenda.

Furthermore, bilateral and multilateral donors are more aware that aid to basic education is an essential part of investment in sustainable human development. They are aware that this aid must be more predictable and long term, and that Africa has the greatest need.

In this regard, the Gleneagles G8 Summit in July 2005 represented a milestone with its promises to increase aid dramatically, including for education and for Africa.

The Paris Declaration, adopted in 2005, is also making a major contribution to aligning and harmonizing aid behind country-led development strategies.

The EFA Fast Track Initiative, launched in 2002, has emerged as the key mechanism to bring donors together around the primary education goal of EFA, focusing support on fundamental issues in basic education, such as national capacity development.

The third condition is the creation of new international EFA mechanisms, which have played a crucial role in maintaining and increasing momentum.

Since 2002, the annual *EFA Global Monitoring Report* has provided high-quality data on EFA progress and an in-depth analysis of specific goals or themes.

The High-Level Group has met annually since 2001, bringing together top-level leaders from the four main EFA constituencies. Each year, it has identified key policy issues, kept the profile of EFA high on the international agenda, and mobilized political commitment.

At the same time, the annual Working Group has provided technical guidance on EFA matters. This year, I introduced a new sequence among these mechanisms to give greater strategic focus to the EFA movement. The Working Group now serves the more specific purpose of preparing the High-Level Group agenda, based on the evidence of the *GMR*. I am pleased to have had very positive feedback from participants in this year's Working Group meeting.

I have also created an International Advisory Panel to support UNESCO in the preparation, coordination and follow-up of these key events.

These new arrangements will, I am convinced, lend greater weight to our deliberations over the next three days, and give higher impact to our recommendations.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The progress we have seen, and the many positive developments in support of EFA, enable us to speak of a real "Dakar effect". As we meet for the second time in this city, we must once again drive the EFA agenda forward. Tremendous challenges lie ahead and 2015 is just around the corner. If we are to meet all of the goals, we must renew our commitments and step up our efforts. And we must do so urgently.

Let me outline what I see as the main challenges ahead.

First and foremost national governments must sustain their commitments, both in terms of policy priorities and budgetary decisions. Many countries have increased allocations to basic education, and seen real results. However, a number of other countries have cut spending, including some of those farthest from achieving the EFA goals. This disturbing trend must be reversed.

Second, donor agencies must honour the pledge they made here in 2000 that "no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources".

Several donors have announced their intention to increase overall aid in the next few years. But even if these pledges are met, aid to basic education is only likely to reach US \$6 billion by 2010. This is still US \$5 billion short of what the *GMR* estimates is needed annually to achieve EFA.

Donor agencies must therefore urgently increase the amount of aid allocated to basic education. They also need to deploy it more effectively.

The geographical distribution of aid must be improved to more closely reflect needs. Africa is still not getting enough support. And greater focus must be given to countries facing conditions of fragility.

Donors must also make greater efforts to improve the quality of aid delivery, in line with the Paris Declaration. Education is a long-term investment that demands sustained and predictable support.

The third major challenge is inclusion. If education really is to be for all, then we must give more attention to the learning needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups. This will require greater investment, financially and educationally, and will necessitate thinking outside the box of traditional educational methods.

A fourth challenge is the quality of basic education. Increased attention needs to be paid to raising the quality of learning for children, youth and adults if the outcomes are to be useful.

Quality is a multifaceted issue. But many of us would agree that more trained teachers is a first priority. An estimated 18 million new teachers are needed worldwide to reach universal primary education by 2015 – nearly 4 million in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

The fifth major challenge is to make progress toward the neglected EFA goals. As I mentioned earlier, the EFA agenda must be pursued in a holistic manner. Young children, youth and adults cannot be left on the sidelines.

Within this commitment to lifelong learning, stronger connections need to be forged with other aspects of education. Access to secondary education, technical and vocational education and training, and other ongoing learning opportunities are all key to maximizing the value and outcomes of basic education. As we address these linkages, however, we must not lose sight of the fundamental vision of EFA: quality basic education for all.

The sixth and final challenge is to make sure all stakeholders work together coherently. We have come a long way in improving coordination, but we must go further.

At national level, many countries still need to engage civil society more as a partner in planning processes, and to improve coordination across ministries, especially to achieve the early childhood and literacy goals.

Donors and multilateral agencies must also enhance the coherence of their action, and better align their support with country-led education sector plans.

The impact and effectiveness of the FTI is clearly visible in primary education. We need now to find ways of supporting countries, financially and in capacity development, across all six EFA goals, particularly those that have been neglected.

These are the main challenges ahead. Let us not underestimate them. But let us not either lose heart. With bold and concerted action they can be overcome.

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting must enable us to work out the priorities for the coming year for all the stakeholders, and we shall evaluate the impact at the eighth meeting of the High-Level Group next year in Norway.

This critical period for education for all is an opportunity to be seized: the challenges are clear; we know what we have to do.

We are duty bound to be equal to the challenge, for it is the future of hundreds of millions of children, young people and adults that is at stake.

Thank you.

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Appendix IV: Agenda of the Meeting

The Seventh Meeting of the EFA High-Level Group aims:

- ▷ *To assess progress in EFA:*
 - *through the monitoring and analysis of the GMR, across the six goals*
 - *through current examples and prospective trends*
- ▷ *To agree on recommendations on top-priority actions for stronger political and financial commitment in the three key areas which are critical to the achievement of EFA by 2015:*
 - *Equity and inclusion*
 - *Quality of education*
 - *Financing of basic education*
- ▷ *To build greater political momentum across the national and international communities to pursue vigorously the EFA goals.*

Drawing upon the discussion points concerning EFA policy, strategy and priority setting elaborated by the Working Group on EFA in Paris (14-16 November 2007), the High-Level Group (HLG) will elaborate a Communiqué, expressing in its key outcomes the priorities which the evidence of the current GMR supports. Thus, certain aspects of EFA will be emphasised, while others will not appear as priorities on this occasion. Setting priorities requires judgements to be made and difficult decisions to be reached. Thus the proposed outcomes of the HLG will not, as in the past, seek to rehearse the overall EFA agenda, nor to include the concerns, target groups or focal areas of every stakeholder. A smaller number of clearly articulated priorities will carry greater force. In any particular year, the priorities will be specific, with a concern, over time, to ensure that all aspects of EFA received attention.

Tuesday, 11 December 2007

9.30 am – 12.30 pm
2.00 pm – 3.30 pm

Registration

12.00 pm – 1.00 pm

Press Conference GMR 2008 (for journalists only)

4.00 pm – 7.00 pm

OPENING CEREMONY CICES

Chairperson:

- Mr Moustapha Sourang, Minister of Education, Senegal

Welcom speech:

- Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Statements by Heads of State and Government (*tbc*):

Message on EFA given by young people

Keynote address

- Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President, Senegal

Dinner given by the President of Senegal

Wednesday, 12 December 2007

9.30 am – 10.00 am

Welcome and Introduction

Opening remarks by:

- Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Adoption of the agenda

Key developments in EFA in 2007, by:

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

10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Working Session I

Education for All by 2015 – Will we make it?

Presentation of the key findings of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 (GMR), by:

- Keith Hinchliffe, Acting Director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report (40 min)

Presentation of the recommendations from the Working Group on EFA, and the HLG Communiqué process

- Nicholas Burnett, ADG/ED (20 min)

Discussion

1.00 pm – 2.30 pm

Lunch given by the Director-General of UNESCO

2.30 pm – 4.15 pm	Working Session II: <i>Reaching the unreached – What needs to be done to promote equity and inclusion, and address disparities within countries?</i>
4.15 pm – 6.00 pm	Working Session III: <i>Quality makes the difference – Next steps to improve quality of education</i>
7.30 pm – 9.30 pm	Dinner given by the Minister of Education, Senegal

Thursday, 13 December 2007

9.30 am – 10.00 am	Update on the Communiqué
10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Working Session IV: <i>Resource mobilization and its effective use – What needs to change?</i>
10.00 am – 10.15 pm	Introduction in plenary
10.15 am – 11.45 pm	Two discussion groups: 1. Financing the neglected goals of EFA: ECCE, ongoing learning programmes, adult literacy 2. Financing EFA: domestic and external resources
11.45 am – 12.00 pm	Feedback and plenary discussion
12.00 pm – 1.15 pm	Working Session V: <i>The way forward: priorities for 2008</i> <i>Chairperson:</i> • Nicholas Burnett, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
1.15 pm – 2.45 pm	Lunch given by UNESCO
3.30 pm – 4.00 pm	Adoption of the Communiqué <i>Chairperson:</i> • Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO
4.00 pm – 4.15 pm	Closing Remarks • Moustapha Sourang, Minister of Education, Senegal
4.30 pm – 5.30 pm	Press Conference
6.00 pm – 8.00 pm	Reception given by UNESCO

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”.

List of acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
ANCEFA	African Network Campaign on Education
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CEEAL	Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DfID	UK Department for International Development
E-9	Nine high-population countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EDI	EFA Development Index
EFA	Education for All
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
G8	Group of eight major industrial democracies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia United Kingdom, United States
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNP	Gross National Product
IAP	International Advisory Panel
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WEF	World Economic Forum

REPORT 2007

High-Level Group on Education for All Seventh Meeting

Dakar, Senegal
11-13 December 2007



After seven meetings, there is a familiar feel about the High-Level Group, with a number of abiding themes. Whichever part of the EFA agenda is being addressed, the perennial question of priorities raises its head. This is particularly sharply focused in discussions on funding, especially external funding. Once again, the fundamental principle from the original Dakar meeting that countries should receive the support they need when they are serious about EFA was quoted, but, once again also, it resulted in little progress in terms of new and long-term commitments.

This year the cross-cutting issues of the neglected EFA goals and support to countries facing conditions of fragility gave another opportunity to revisit priorities. These issues did indeed crop up in a number of sessions, informing debate on equity and financing particularly. If there were no clear conclusions to address these areas in new ways, it was perhaps because there is a need for further reflection about innovative strategies. What was perfectly clear, however, was the recognition that both the neglected EFA goals and fragility cover large groups of people who currently have inadequate access to quality basic education: young children, out-of-school and de-schooled young people, displaced and disempowered victims of conflict or disaster, or unschooled adults. It is this focus on the people behind the issues that will in the end lead to new action.

On the whole, the 2007 High-Level Group worked towards a clearer set of priorities for 2008 and beyond. This was due in large measure to the new sequence of EFA meetings which meant that the EFA Working Group, meeting a month earlier, provided a sound analysis of the evidence and messages of the most recent 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report. This new confluence of evidence, reflection, negotiation and articulation strengthened the sense that current progress and challenges do indeed shape the priorities of the future.

Members of the High-Level Group are only too aware of the need to strengthen its impact through a stronger expression of political will. This concern, which will drive efforts in organizing subsequent meetings, becomes all the more urgent as the 2015 deadline moves inexorably closer.