

**Launch of the UNESCO 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report
Education for All 2000 – 2015: achievements and challenges
National Institute of Education, 10 June 2015**

**Welcome speech by Ms Anne Lemaistre
Representative of UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh**

Your Excellency Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport
Your Excellency Dr. Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State and National EFA Coordinator
Excellencies Secretaries of State, Under Secretaries of State, Rectors, Director Generals
Representatives of the national and international organizations
Distinguished Guests
Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor and privilege for me to welcome you all to the launch of 2015 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report “Education for all 2000 – 2015: achievements and challenges”. In welcoming you, I would like to thank His Excellency Minister Dr. Hang Chuon Naron for being with us today to preside over the launch of the report and reflect on priorities and actions for us to consider in coming years.

To start with, please allow me to say a few words about the UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report, as commonly known as the EFA-GMR. It was 15 years ago, the international community met together in Dakar Senegal in April 2000 and agreed to six major goals to ensure Education for All by 2015. The Dakar resolution made it clear that all stakeholders –governments, development partners, and civil society organizations— shall be accountable for the commitments they’ve made. The national governments agreed to dedicate themselves to reforming policy agendas while the international community pledged that no country committed to these goals shall be prevented from achieving the goals due to lack of resources.

UNESCO was tasked to monitor the implementation of these pledges and commitments, and to keep the world community informed. This is how the EFA-GMR was established. The GMR is an independent publication commissioned by UNESCO on behalf of the

international community. This is the final edition for the period 2000 – 2015 and was released internationally on 9th April 2015, one month before the World Education Forum in Incheon (Republic of Korea). The findings were widely discussed in the forum and its recommendations were instrumental in framing the World Education Forum Declaration (copy in your folders) as well as for the education goals and targets under post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Excellency, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the report we learn that only a third of countries reached global education goals and only half of all countries have achieved the most **watched goal of universal primary enrolment**. In this regard, let me share a story. A group of people in room were shown a sheet of white paper with a dot in the middle with a question “what do you see?” All said the “dot”. Then the person asked, “what about the remaining white space in the paper?” The participants smiled and said they now see the blank portion too. It is easy to see what is missing or not accomplished. Though the world couldn’t achieve the goals, nearly two-thirds more children were enrolled in early childhood education than in 1999, 50 million more children are enrolled in school now than were in 1999, lower secondary education increased by 27% and more than doubled in sub-Saharan Africa, Gender parity at primary and secondary level continues to improve, there is increasing attention on quality, teachers and learning assessments.

These are positive stories, but far too many dots do exist in the paper that needs to be addressed. Some of these dots we are familiar and struggling to address are, early childhood care and development, age specific enrolments, accessibility for disabled learners, textbooks and learning materials, trained, motivated and well supported teachers, adult literacy, parental engagements and most important adequate investments in education and training. Madame Irina Bokova, UNESCO-Director General notes this to sum-up the progress and challenges, “*The world has made tremendous*

progress towards Education for All. Despite not meeting the 2015 deadline, millions more children are in school than would have been had the trends of the 1990s persisted. However, the agenda is far from finished. We need to see specific, well-funded strategies that prioritize the poorest especially girls, improve the quality of learning and reduce the literacy gap so that education becomes meaningful and universal.”

Excellency, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Education for All remains an unfinished agenda. The GMR recommends the following actions to be considered in the post-2015 agenda for education. These recommendations I am sure will resonate with our ongoing efforts in Cambodia:

Completing the EFA agenda: Governments should make at least one year of pre-primary education compulsory. Education must be free for all children: fees for tuition, textbooks, school uniforms and transport must be abolished. Policy makers should identify and prioritize skills to be acquired by the end of each stage of schooling. Literacy policies should link up with the needs of communities. Teacher training should be improved to include gender-focused strategies. Teaching styles should better reflect student needs and the diversity of classroom contexts.

Equity: Governments, donors and civil society must develop programmes and target funding to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged so no child is left behind. Governments should close critical data gaps in order to be able to direct resources to those most in need.

Post-2015: Future education targets for education must be specific, relevant and realistic. At current rates, only half of all children in low-income countries are expected to complete lower secondary education by 2030. In many countries even the core goal of achieving universal primary education will remain out of reach without concerted efforts.

Close the finance gap: The international community, in partnership with countries, must find the means to bridge the US\$22 billion annual finance gap for quality pre-primary and basic education for all by 2030. Clear education finance targets must be established within the Sustainable Development Goals where none currently exist.

Your Excellency Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Panels we observed this morning demonstrate the achievements of Cambodia in terms of EFA commitments, nation-wide as well by provinces. I would like to congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia for the commitment to EFA agenda, and to the Leadership of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for your continued and sustained efforts to translate the Government commitments to concrete actions to ensure education for all. Also I would like to acknowledge the role of international and national community in supporting these efforts.

We all know what these challenges are and have relevant policies and action plans in place. Our focus in the next fifteen years will be to implement and closely monitor implementation of these policies and action plans, so that on 10 June 2030, when the Sustainable Development Goal 4 Report on Education is launched here at NIE, Cambodia is recognized as a “Global Champion of Education”.

I would like to welcome all of you once again, especially the Chair of this event, Excellency Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport, Excellencies Secretaries of State, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. I invite you to read the 2015 EFA-GMR Report and the Summary. I look forward to our conversations on further strengthening the quality of education and training for all learners in Cambodia.

Thank you!