



Fifth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting  
Cairo, Egypt, 19-21 December 2003

REPORT

Bangladesh

Brazil

China

Egypt

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Pakistan





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REPORT

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## **Preface by the Director-General of UNESCO**

The Ministers of Education from the nine high-population (E-9) countries met on 19-21 December 2003 in Cairo, Egypt, to participate in the fifth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the E-9 Initiative. I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Egypt who so generously hosted the meeting. The Ministers from the E-9 countries reviewed progress towards education for all (EFA) and reaffirmed their commitment to work more closely together to achieve the six goals set at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000. The Ministerial Review Meeting was preceded by an expert meeting on Early Childhood Education Care and Education (ECCE) in the E-9 countries. The outcomes of the expert meeting were discussed by the Ministers during the meeting and were included in the Cairo Declaration.

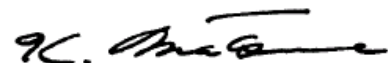
The E-9 Initiative was created in follow-up to the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, in order to strengthen collaboration between the nine high-population countries in their quest to provide quality education for all. The E-9 countries are home to over 50 per cent of the world's population and account for 70 per cent of illiterate adults and more than 40 per cent of the world's out-of-school children.

In response to a critical external evaluation of the E-9 Initiative, the nine Member States came out with a visionary and forceful Declaration that promises to reinvigorate the Initiative and provide it with an effective structure for continuing its future work. The Cairo Declaration highlights the encouraging progress in EFA in the E-9 countries during the past decade and underlines the challenges these countries are facing in order to achieve education for all in their countries.

The E-9 Education Ministers committed themselves to a set of actions, the three most important of which are as follows. First, they recognized the need to revitalize and realign the E-9 Initiative in light of developments since the World Education Forum so that the E-9 group plays a lead role within the EFA movement. Second, they agreed to broaden their partnership by including key international actors, civil society and the corporate/private sector. Third, they decided to strengthen administrative arrangements by setting up an E-9 focal point in each country. The Cairo Declaration calls on UNESCO and the E-9 countries to establish a rotational secretariat located in the host E-9 country. The secretariat will be supported by the UNESCO Division of International Coordination and Monitoring for EFA, the national E-9 focal points and the UNESCO Offices in the nine countries. The secretariat will be located in Egypt in 2004 and, thereafter, for a period of two years (2005-2006), in Mexico, in keeping with Mexico's generous offer made in Cairo to host the sixth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting in 2005.

This report, by presenting the keynote speeches of the opening session, key working documents and the Cairo Declaration, provides a useful source of reference about an occasion which may well be a pivotal moment in the development of the E-9 Initiative.

I hope that the deliberations in our meeting in Cairo and its significant outcomes will inspire us all to take steps to work together to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals.



Koïchiro Matsuura

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## **Cairo Declaration of the E-9 Countries**

We, the Ministers and representatives of the nine high-population countries, have come together in Cairo to review the progress made in Education for All (EFA) in our countries in follow-up to the recommendation of the fourth E-9 Meeting in Beijing that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) be the specific theme of the fifth meeting. We also discussed future strategies for the E-9 Initiative in the perspective of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* and in light of our experiences during the past decade since the launch of the E-9 Initiative (Delhi, 1993). We thank the Government of Egypt for hosting the meeting and for its generous hospitality. The leadership and support of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt have been crucial in the successful organization of this historic tenth anniversary meeting. Our deliberations have been enriched by the inspiring address of Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, the First Lady of Egypt.

We strongly reaffirm our commitment to the goals set by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, March 1990), the Delhi Declaration (December 1993) and the Dakar Framework for Action (April 2000) to meet the basic learning needs of all our peoples. We restate our commitment to the Jomtien vision of ECCE that learning begins at birth and to the first Dakar Goal to expand and improve comprehensive ECCE services for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

### **Progress towards EFA Goals**

We are encouraged by the evident progress in EFA in the E-9 countries during the past decade:

1. All nine countries have clearly demonstrated the need to integrate ECCE within government policy and legislative frameworks.
2. Access to ECCE has been expanded through formal, non-formal and informal services, involving parents, communities, NGOs, private institutions and government.
3. E-9 countries have experienced visible improvements in their enrolment ratios in pre-primary education from 1990 to date.
4. E-9 countries have reported the capacity to accommodate all school-age children in basic education in 2000 and most have recorded significant increases in the enrolment ratios over the past decade.
5. Enrolment in secondary and tertiary education has increased over the past decade in almost all countries.

6. Adult literacy rates have increased, especially for women.
7. E-9 countries are experiencing encouraging demographic trends that should positively influence the progress towards EFA.
8. According to internationally available data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) for 2000/2001, four countries of this group have achieved gender parity in gross enrolment at primary level and two have nearly achieved this; four of these countries have achieved gender parity in secondary education.
9. Several E-9 countries have initiated fruitful collaboration with one another on EFA issues, notably bilateral cooperation between Egypt/China and Nigeria/Brazil and the South Asia Forum of Ministers on EFA.
10. Several E-9 countries started successful efforts towards achieving quality education for all.

## **Challenges**

Despite these positive trends, we still face a number of challenges:

1. Our countries account for more than 40 per cent of the world's out-of-school children, 70 per cent of the world's illiterate adults and more than half of the children below six years of age.
2. Poverty and inequity continue to impede the achievements made by the E-9 countries in EFA.
3. Inadequate awareness of the importance of ECCE among all stakeholders continues to impede the integration of ECCE into basic education in all our countries.
4. Inequitable access to quality services and the distribution of resources in education for disadvantaged children, particularly girls, continues to prevail.
5. The size of the current gender gap in adult literacy in most countries and the pace at which it has been narrowing needs particular attention and calls for concrete actions.
6. In some countries, repetition, dropout, low attendance and poor school performance are undermining progress towards achieving EFA objectives.
7. Mechanisms are inadequate for ensuring timely and accurate data for planning purposes in EFA, particularly ECCE.

8. Despite increased budgetary allocations by governments to basic education, funding constraints affecting EFA progress continue to be a challenge.
9. Lack of integrated planning and inter-sectoral coordination in ECCE continues to adversely affect EFA progress.
10. Lack of qualified and experienced professionals in ECCE imposes constraints upon the expansion and quality of ECCE services including the non-formal sector.

### **Actions by E-9 countries**

Taking into account lessons from experience, the deliberations of the meeting and ongoing evaluation processes, we hereby commit to the following actions:

1. Revitalize and realign the E-9 Initiative in light of post-Dakar developments so that the E-9 group plays a lead role within the EFA movement.
2. Reaffirm the indivisibility of the six Dakar goals within the context of international agreements, frameworks and strategies.
3. In keeping with wider EFA practice, the E-9 Initiative should broaden its partnership to include key international actors, civil society and the corporate/private sector within the framework of the E-9 Initiative.
4. Take concrete measures to promote technical cooperation among the E-9 countries and other developing countries in areas such as rural education, open and distance learning, ICTs, research and knowledge transfers, inter-institutional linkages and exchanges of students as well as teachers, and establish a databank of successful innovations (such as the family allowance programmes in Brazil that endeavour to keep children in school).
5. Raise and maintain the profile of EFA within the E-9 countries through culturally sensitive advocacy, regular high-level meetings, technical workshops, joint publications, the sharing of best practices and exchange visits between EFA practitioners at national and international levels.
6. Strengthen the existing E-9 website maintained by UNESCO with links to national EFA websites.
7. Strengthen administrative arrangements in each E-9 country by setting up an E-9 focal point that would orchestrate follow-up action, provide continuity and monitor implementation regarding issues highlighted at biennial ministerial meetings.



8. Establish a rotational secretariat located within the host E-9 country (Egypt in 2004 and in 2005-2006 Mexico, which will be the host of the sixth Ministerial Review Meeting). The secretariat will be supported by the UNESCO Division of International Coordination and Monitoring for EFA and the national E-9 Focal Points. This Secretariat should have the mandate to effect follow-up, to provide continuity and to monitor implementation of issues highlighted at biennial ministerial review meetings of the E-9.
9. Establish a pattern of annual meetings of officials in years intervening between E-9 ministerial meetings.
10. Utilize opportunities for E-9 ministers to meet at international events (e.g. UNESCO General Conference, International Conference on Education).
11. Enhance effective linkages with, and representation in, EFA mechanisms (e.g. High-Level Group, Working Group on EFA, Fast-Track Initiative, EFA Flagships such as UNGEI and relevant regional and subregional bodies).
12. Ensure participation of the E-9 Chair at high-level meetings of the international development partners, including the annual FTI donors' meeting.
13. Develop and strengthen policy frameworks in ECCE, particularly in regard to care services for younger children and the education of parents.
14. At national level, establish the lead responsibility for ECCE in order to effectively mobilize key stakeholders and ensure appropriate inter-ministerial coordination.
15. Build genuine partnership with the private sector and civil society in ECCE in order to expand access and improve quality (AGFUND provided a useful example of this).
16. Promote quality and excellence in education through a balanced approach to expanding access and improving learning outcomes.
17. Improve the timeliness and quality of disaggregated data at national level by strengthening EMIS processes, augment the capacity of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in the collection, analysis and collation of statistical data and improve the interface between E-9 countries and UIS.

### **The role of international development partners**

1. EFA is a common and shared responsibility of the developing as well as the industrialized countries. Building a genuine and sustainable partnership is therefore crucial in our joint endeavour to achieve the Dakar EFA goals and Millennium Development Goals. This ultimately is the best investment for ensuring peace and harmony.

2. Considering the pledge made in Dakar by the international community to closing the EFA funding gap, we urge bilateral and multilateral agencies to make concerted and practical steps to support the efforts made in Oslo on improving the scope and functioning of FTI. Nevertheless, we note with concern that the E-9 countries are yet to benefit from additional resource flows from the Initiative. The international community is urged to revisit the question of debt swaps for education to support country efforts for resource mobilization for EFA. There is a need for UNESCO to increase its advocacy role for securing increased funding for EFA, especially the E-9 countries. UNESCO should facilitate the monitoring and tracking of resources for EFA from national and international sources.
3. UNESCO needs to address its coordination role in a more proactive manner and ensure proper integration of the E-9 initiative with international coordination mechanisms for EFA. The E-9 countries welcome UNESCO's commitment to strengthen field offices and its leadership role in EFA.
4. External agencies need to support and respect country development agendas and education reform processes toward the delivery of EFA.
5. The support and cooperation of international development partners are of utmost importance for accelerating progress towards the EFA goals set at Dakar and the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Next meeting**

Mexico generously offered to host the sixth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting. The theme will reflect the EFA agenda and the meeting will be held in two years' time.

## **Speech by H.E. Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, the First Lady of Egypt**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you present in Cairo. Our meeting today is of great importance since it reaffirms our collective commitment and pledge to intensify and accelerate our efforts to bridge the education divide and open up educational opportunities for all.

We gathered here in our capacity of the E-9, which encompasses more than half of the population of the world, to assess our performance since Dakar. E-9 is a forum for South to South Dialogue. It strengthens our solidarity and in keeping with its mandate, helps us build a constructive dialogue that sheds light on our experiences, our challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Dakar was indeed a turning point in our quest to ensure the rights of all children to quality education. It was in Dakar where Egypt coined a new slogan “Excellence for All” and not merely “Education for All” for its education reform campaign.

Since then, we have been working toward realizing an education for all where no child in our society is denied his or her right to quality education, where the capacity of children and youth is nurtured to its fullest potential, and last but not the least an education for all where equal opportunities and means of participation can be accessible to all groups.

Adopting a rights-based participatory approach to developing human resources to its fullest potential is the core of the New Development Paradigm. Global, regional and national experiences reveal numerous achievements as well as lessons learnt. These indicate the need to shift the focus from setting macroeconomic goals and concentrate more on human development targets, the need to substitute welfare approaches targeting vulnerable groups to rights-based agendas and the need to create more space for partnerships and effective participation.

It is a new paradigm where people are recognized as key actors and owners of their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services; where strategies are empowering; and where programmes focus on the more marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded groups.

In a rights-based approach, rights are indivisible; they are all structurally inherent, to the dignity of every person. They are interdependent and interrelated. The right to education is central to the attainment of all rights. Examples are many. Access to good health for instance, is assisted when one enjoys the right to education, since it creates better health awareness.

For Egypt, education and health are clear national priorities. Like many other nations, we have learnt that these are inseparable pillars and should be addressed within a holistic and

multidisciplinary approach. It is critical then that they are viewed as inputs of an integrated development process where gender issues are mainstreamed and civil society is effectively mobilized to support its ownership and sustainability.

We need to realize that these are not mutually exclusive paths or separate agendas. It is all about the young child who gets the chance to learn the skills and acquires a healthy approach for a more productive life; the individual who respects differences and does not tolerate injustice; the citizen who is aware of his or her rights as well as responsibilities; and the leader who leads and excels by example.

Distinguished guests,

Today what brings us together is a commitment to our dreams and those of our societies, dreams that are founded on the quality of education. Yet, the type of education that can make these dreams come true is a long term process that relies on a variety of approaches. Its momentum can only be sustained through the active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders including families, societies and children themselves.

It is the understanding of the crucial role of education that has brought us together today; and has guided us in adopting strategies and programmes translating the Dakar commitment into action.

Within the context of assessing our various deliberations in this vitally important field, I can easily stand here and enumerate Egypt's commitments to EFA goals which are many. Suffice to say that budgetary allocations from 3.6 billion pounds in 1990/91 to 23.8 billion pound at present. For Egypt, this budgetary increase represented a sound investment made at a critical when the economic reform programme was being implemented. I am tempted to share with you other initiatives that reflect our unwavering determination to invest in educational processes. Yet, I am certain that our Minister of Education will be doing so. Let me say that for countries that are economically challenged and for those seeking sustainable economic reforms, education for all is imperative to realize these goals.

Distinguished Delegates,

Many of the countries represented here today will support my views on the importance of early childhood development programmes as a foundation to quality education that we are all seeking. A large body of research has proven that children who participate in well conceived Early Childhood Development programmes tend to be more successful in later school, are more competent socially and emotionally, and show higher verbal and intellectual development during early childhood than children who are not enrolled in such programmes. Ensuring healthy child development, therefore, is an investment in a country's future workforce and its capacity to thrive economically and as a society.

Given that this is the theme that you have chosen for your deliberations, I have no doubt that the questions asked and issues raised will benefit from the collective experiences we

together bring today to this summit. For vulnerable groups of children, these experiences can certainly provide valuable inputs to a positive start in life. The evidence we have confirms that early childhood development has a significant impact on breaking the cycle of poverty and supporting children whose lifestyles otherwise expose them to high risk. To that end we need professional cadres and a curriculum that meets quality standards.

The new Center for Childhood and Development that is being supported by UNESCO and AGFUND, which we launched today, will represent a milestone in our efforts to meet the targets set by the presidential declaration on the Second Decade for the protection and well being of the Egyptian child. I would like to extend to both UNESCO and AGFUND, my deep appreciation for their collaborative efforts which led to this achievement.

Distinguished guests,

The inseparable link between education, health, poverty reduction and gender parity have led us in Egypt to adopt a rights-based integrated approach focusing on human development. The experience of setting up the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the National Council for Women was indeed rewarding. These two institutions – working closely with other governmental and non-governmental organizations – currently represent vehicles for monitoring and following up on the status of children and women. The reports, studies and initiatives undertaken by both institutions confirm time and time again the link between education and effective management of population problems.

Today I would like to highlight some of the initiatives we have undertaken to support learning experiences. Setting up girl-friendly schools as part of the integrated Girls' Education Initiative is one way of managing low enrolment rates among girls, as well as catering for the special needs of school drop-outs, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children.

However, improving literacy and promoting education is a mission which does not rely solely on the efforts of formal educational institutions, but on a vast system of innovative complementary challenges.

Another source of pride is the reading for all campaign which has grown from success to success over 13 years to become a model for other countries. Through reprinting books that would have ordinarily been unaffordable to most segments of the population, and selling them at nominal prices, another of our initiatives, the family library, has ensured accessibility to valuable books at nominal prices. We succeeded in printing 40 million copies since 1994. The family library managed to reinstitute the book as an important and permanent source of knowledge as well as reliable tool of learning in the modern age of technological challenges.

On another front, the 'Read to Your Child' campaign addresses parents so that they realize the importance of reading to children. The campaign is driven by the belief that a child reads best when read to by parents from the earliest age.

A child whose reading skills are below average at the end of the first grade has only one chance in nine of ever catching up. 'There is no difference between a child who does not read and a child who cannot read, both are equally illiterate'.

These awareness campaigns have come hand in hand with the establishment of public and children's libraries, with special attention to disadvantaged areas. Most of these libraries have evolved into multimedia centres, linking both adults and children to a wealth of knowledge through the use of new information and communication technologies which have changed the meaning of time and space. Similarly, the successful launch of the Arabic version of *Sesame Street* provided an effective channel for communicating life skills to children across Egypt in a child-friendly and creative format.

Distinguished guests,

Learning is the product of open and diversified access to knowledge and experience. Learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live with others, were proposed as the foundation of education by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century.

Within this context a wide range of activities were held in Cairo last week revealing our zeal for reaching these objectives.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Cairo International Book Fair for children united publishers from many countries to display their outstanding collection of children's literature. In the symposium held during the fair they shared their experience and views over the value books hold for shaping the children's future by promoting timeless values such as peace, tolerance and working together for a better world.

The inauguration of the Arab Council for Books for Children and Young People opens a new horizon for national and regional activities aiming at enhancing the overall quality of books.

The first International Youth Peace Camp that took place two days ago attracted a large number of children and young people with diverse cultural backgrounds. Together they interacted with others, shared and compared experiences, and all along realized that our differences are natural, inherent and fundamental. The same positive spirit permeated their 'Walk' in Sharm El Sheikh, reaffirming the message of peace, tolerance and hope. This reinforces the fact that experience is the best teacher indeed, what this group acquired in only ten days, rooted as it is in practice, everyday reality and insights, far surpasses any lessons they could have otherwise learnt through traditional educational processes.

During the same week the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood hosted the global launch of UNICEF *State of the World's Children Report 2004* focusing on girls' education. The event was a testimony of the rigorous national effort unleashed to achieve gender equality and ensure the right of all children to quality education, a key to peace, security and development.

Egypt's country gender assessment report, a joint effort to the National Council for Women and the World Bank, was also launched this week. The report is a milestone in the history of NCW and a commitment to future actions. It reflected education as a priority for the enhancement of women particularly in rural areas. One of the key messages of the report was that early childhood development programmes addressing cognitive and attitudinal dimensions represent a vital intervention toward the elimination of gender gaps and the enhancement of the status of women.

These events are a living testimony of our vision, that investing in learning and education through various channels has the highest returns for sustained human development. It is a proof of our determination to achieve our goals of good quality basic education for everyone by 2015, despite the daunting challenges that still lie ahead. We need to all join hands. States cannot do it alone, and even if they do, it will not be sustainable. The public sector, the private sector, the local communities, non-governmental organizations, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, and regional and international organizations have a responsibility to share.

Our collective wisdom enhanced by viable international cooperation will help us to achieve the goals we set in Dakar. It will help us ensure that every child has a good start to his or her life and that today's world is truly fit for our children.

To conclude best wishes and full success in your endeavours and deliberations.

Thank you.

## **Speech by H.E. Dr Hussein K. Bahaa El Din, Egypt's Minister of Education**

Excellencies Mrs Mubarak, Crown Prince Talal Bin Abdel Aziz, Mr Matsuura, excellencies Ministers of Education, international agency representatives, international delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my privilege to be with you today and to welcome you to Egypt once again and to wish you at the outset a fruitful and special stay.

I would like at this important summit to acknowledge President Mubarak's sponsorship of this Conference in addition to recognizing H.E.'s commitment to Education, which he has identified as Egypt's National Priority, and Egypt's National Security, a strategy that was internationally recognized through UNESCO's award. I would also like to acknowledge Her Excellency Mrs Mubarak, ongoing support and creative input to education, her efforts towards the welfare of the Egyptian child, and her commitment to Peace. Mrs Mubarak's input over the years, to mention a few examples, has included the Reading for All Initiative, which was internationally recognized, the One Classroom Initiative and for the education of girls, the Girls' Education Initiative, and the Education of Children with Special Needs. Mrs Mubarak has chaired the national conferences of education reform from 1993 till now. Her Excellency has also provided leadership for our new focus on early childhood development and care through her 2001 creative initiative of the International Conference on Early Childhood Development, and the development of the new centre. Moreover, her support for extending the Decade for the Welfare of the Egyptian Child into a Second Decade (2000-2010) is noteworthy.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank His Excellency Prince Talal for his substantial support and continuous commitment to Education and child welfare and for his specific support of the Early Childhood Development Centre. We are indeed hopeful that this centre will be a catalyst that will enhance the lives of our children.

Today's meeting marks an important day for our collective efforts since it marks the tenth birthday of this body of Ministers, and an end to a very fruitful decade that was both invigorating and rewarding for our individual countries and for us as representatives of countries who are facing similar challenges at this critical juncture of our human civilization. Our citizens, including the youngest who are the focus of this Ministerial meeting, are dependent on us and we, in turn, are responsible for providing them with our best efforts to ensure for them a promising future in a rapidly changing world. The Dakar Education Forum which has identified six specific goals, and the Millennium Development Goals provide us with challenges that need to be addressed in our specific countries and our global community. The E-9 countries in effect provide a critical mass of our human population since, as Mrs Mubarak stressed, we include more than half of the total world population.

I recall our initial meetings in Delhi in 1993 when the nine ministers and international partners enthusiastically embarked on an opportunity that was expected to help us focus



on specific dimensions of education and to consider potential collaborative efforts between us and between our countries and multilateral or bilateral partners. Some of our joint efforts have in fact included innovative strategies for –

- Expanding the emphasis on education for all to excellence for all our citizens.
- Developing distance education strategies that capitalized on new computer and multimedia technologies.
- Identifying new approaches to teacher training and
- Identifying creative strategies for addressing the gender disparity challenge.

Today, we are embarking on another dimension of education and considering important components that will influence the development of our children and consequently their future. I would like to focus our attention during the next few minutes on three critical issues:

- Early childhood development and school readiness
- Quality education for our youngest students
- Capitalizing on the E-9 track record and momentum

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL READINESS

Concern about early childhood as a comprehensive experience for human development implies, as many of us are aware, a multi-sector strategy that considers various dimensions of a child's development including the development of the brain. I actually believe that every newborn is potentially a genius in genesis, in need of nurturing, care and development. While focusing on the education component, we will need to take into consideration the diversity of children who will be coming to our kindergarten classroom, which will also imply that we need to take into consideration their potential development diversity.

As we may be aware, research has indicated that the first six years of life do lay the foundation for many of the knowledge bases and skills required for successful school adjustment, and later life competencies, which would help them in their adult life competitiveness. This implies a complex set of interactions between a child's genetic endowment and the environment around them. Moreover, traditional ideas that focused on cognitive and language skills as the pre-requisites for school readiness have expanded to include physical well being and motor development, emotional health and a positive approach to new experiences, social knowledge, and social competence.

While our understanding of school readiness has expended, we have also become aware of the multiple intelligences of humans, which include:

- Linguistic intelligence
- Logical or mathematical intelligence
- Spatial intelligence
- Bodily kinesthetic intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence

- Intrapersonal intelligence
- Factual intelligence
- Athletic intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Practical intelligence
- Intuitive intelligence

Recognizing multiple intelligences and capitalizing on the windows of opportunity that are open during the first years of life will imply a major transformation in the ways schools or education are run, which traditionally may have focused on language or mathematical skills. Diversity of the background of children, school readiness, and the potential of multiple intelligences present us with a unique opportunity for creating an environment and an educational experience that will enable our young students and our countries to capitalize on those early years, thus, creating the dynamic for a positive experience for schooling.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR OUR YOUNGEST STUDENTS

As already mentioned by Her Excellency Mrs Mubarak, Egypt considers excellence for all to be a human right that is to be set before us as we plan for all our students however marginal, young, poor, or handicapped they may be. To achieve the goal of excellence for all, Egypt, has mobilized its academic and professional experts to identify national education standards that would ensure a basic level of quality that would meet the needs of students more effectively. Egypt's standards in effect have taken into consideration both the historical and economic context of Egypt while paying attention to international research and findings. Implementation of these standards at present involves mobilizing political support, developing extensive training for teachers and school administrators, and publicizing it to all stakeholders in society. In fact, implementation of Egypt's Educational Standards will move towards developing extensive training for teachers and school administrators, and publicizing to all stakeholders in society. In fact, implementation of Egypt's educational standards will move towards developing a clear link between programme goals, programme activities and the educational indicators that will determine the quality of a programme.

Moreover, considering the great potential of early childhood development for achieving quality and excellence for all, we have to keep all stakeholders at the centre of our efforts. This implies that quality concerns need to focus on programmes for children in their pre-school age, the family, the community and society. Input from professionals including pediatricians, social workers and media experts, different types of practitioners including NGOs and grass root workers can also inform our quality based priorities. Moreover, our focus on quality for early childhood care can be guided by international standards, which have defined children's basic rights through the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Education for All initiative, the 1993 Delhi Declaration, and the 2000 Dakar Education Forum.

Egypt's experience with its national education standards and its new focus on early childhood development have influenced its initiative for establishing a workshop group

that is identifying Egyptian national standards for early childhood education. Education standards for Egypt are not a static limiting framework but will hopefully be a dynamic one that guides the process of education.

## CAPITALIZING ON THE E-9 MOMENTUM

Ten years of collaboration between our nine countries have provided us with numerous successful pilot initiatives, which have influenced our work. Our recurring meetings have provided us with opportunities for sharing experiences, considering challenges, proposing alternative solutions, modifying resolutions, moving towards serving the needs of our citizens, and consequently moving towards achieving the Dakar Goals. E-9 has proven to be a successful initiative with a very sensitive and large target group, including the majority of the world's children. Our joint efforts have helped us to develop an important cadre of professionals and experts and implement different initiatives, which have proven to be both invigorating and worthwhile for each of our countries and for us collectively.

Achievements of the E-9 do not in any way imply that we have overcome all challenges, but in effect remind us of the fact that we have an additional opportunity for focusing on early childhood development and education. This opportunity provides us with a clean slate for preparing a framework for an area that has not been adequately addressed by our educational programmes.

UNESCO's identification of early childhood development as one of its flagship programmes can also be enhanced through the E-9 structure. We have over the past few years developed a better understanding of what works among our nine countries, and how our efforts could be enhanced. We therefore have another opportunity to move forward towards a successful strategy for our children.

Excellencies and Honourable Guests,

A decade of successful collaborative work is behind us during which our nine countries, in partnership with our stakeholders and the international community, have moved forward towards meeting one of the basic needs of our citizens. Our present focus on early childhood development and care will necessitate for us a holistic approach that recognizes the health, nutrition, physical, social and intellectual development of our children. By supporting a quality early start for our children, we will ensure that we are focusing on an important phase of their human development in addition to providing children with a positive step on their educational journey.

Once again, I would like to welcome your Excellencies and all participants to this important meeting, to welcome our international guests, to wish you the best for your deliberations and to use this opportunity to extend my thanks again for all those who have worked towards making this conference a success.

## **Speech by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO**

Your Excellency, the First Lady of Egypt,  
Distinguished Ministers of the E-9 countries,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honour to be here with you today for the opening of this biennial meeting of E-9 Ministers, being held for the first time here in Cairo, Egypt. Let me say from the outset how grateful we are for the generous hospitality of the First Lady, Mrs Mubarak, and for the excellent cooperation of the Minister of Education, Dr El Din.

This is the second E-9 ministerial meeting that I have attended since becoming the Director-General of UNESCO, the first being the useful Beijing conference held two years ago. This ministerial meeting is a regular event on the E-9 calendar but, coming ten years after the inauguration of the E-9 Initiative in New Delhi, India, it is an opportune moment for reflection.

The Initiative, which was created in the follow-up to the Jomtien Conference (1990), placed heightened attention on the E-9 countries for two main reasons. First, the relationship between education and population loomed particularly large because of the growing recognition that increased educational levels typically correlated positively with declining rates of population growth. Second, even with demographic trends in decline, the size of the high-population countries meant that the chances of making general progress towards the EFA and other education goals would be much enhanced if E-9 countries in particular were doing well.

During the ten years since the launch of the Initiative, there have been many positive developments in the E-9 countries. These include reductions in annual average population growth rates in all nine countries as well as educational improvements reflected in indicators covering several areas of education. In 2000, however, the E-9 countries, with over 50 per cent of the world's population, accounted for 70 per cent of the world's illiterate adults and more than 40 per cent of the world's out-of-school children. Educational trends among the E-9 countries are far from uniform, of course; some countries have certainly been making more educational progress than others. In some E-9 countries, the educational mountain remains very steep.

Whatever may be the exact relationship between the E-9 Initiative and the pattern of demographic and educational trends in recent years, the Initiative itself may be seen to have enjoyed considerable attention at first but afterwards, as years passed by, it appeared to lose some strength of purpose and identity. In the mid-1990s, for example, the E-9 countries sometimes acted as a definite group within some international forums; this tends not to happen today.

From the beginning, the clear emphasis of the E-9 Initiative has been upon EFA, and this was reinforced by the renewal of commitment made at the Dakar Conference in April 2000. There have been a number of post-Dakar developments, however, that collectively have created a new context for the Initiative and we need to take them into account.

Today, there is a clear need to better understand the Initiative - its purposes, its character and its consequences. To this end, UNESCO commissioned an independent external evaluation; you have received a copy of the evaluation report, along with other documents. I shall be frank. I am not satisfied with the professional quality of this evaluation, whose findings, conclusions and recommendations rest upon a weak basis of objective evidence. Let me be very clear: the external evaluation is independent and, as such, it does not reflect UNESCO's official position concerning the E-9 Initiative. Nevertheless, despite major misgivings over its lack of high professional quality, I have distributed the report in the interest of transparency.

The report, please note, is just one part of an ongoing evaluation process looking into the record of the E-9 Initiative and considering possible ways forward. We – and I mean both UNESCO and the E-9 countries - do need to learn lessons from the first ten years but our main purpose should be to look forward with a clearer vision and stronger determination. A “Note on the E-9 Initiative”, independently prepared by my staff, has been circulated to you and this contains a number of suggestions and positive orientations that I hope have been useful for your discussions. The key questions we must ask are: what has been the added value of the Initiative as far as the EFA drive in E-9 countries is concerned? And what could be the Initiative's future benefits?

It is my strong hope that the E-9 Initiative will continue and become more active as I believe it could make a significant contribution to the achievement of EFA not only in the E-9 countries themselves but also more widely. In order to have a greater impact, however, the E-9 Initiative needs to be strengthened, and its goals and methods need to become more focused and better understood. Indeed, it may be necessary to re-visit its rationale and to devise and implement improved mechanisms of coordination and collaboration.

This process, in fact, has already begun at this meeting and I am encouraged by the importance you continue to attach to the Initiative. For its part, UNESCO sees at least five areas where it can make useful contributions to the further development of the E-9 Initiative:

First, we shall try to establish a closer linkage between the E-9 Initiative and the EFA process. In this context, I have decided to assign responsibility for assisting coordination and networking regarding the Initiative to the EFA International Coordination Unit based at UNESCO Headquarters. This will have the major advantage of placing liaison with the E-9 Initiative among the main tasks of the UNESCO team that is directly involved in organizing meetings of the High-Level Group and the Working Group on EFA and promoting links with all constituencies within the EFA movement. In fact, the link

between E-9 countries and the High-Level Group is already strong. Following the first meeting of the High-Level Group in Paris in November 2001, the two subsequent meetings were held in E-9 countries – in Nigeria in 2002 and this year in India. Furthermore, the next two meetings are scheduled to be held in E-9 countries: in Brazil next year and then in China in 2005.

Second, UNESCO shall also seek to encourage stronger links between the E-9 Initiative and regional and subregional EFA processes in follow-up to Dakar. This, perhaps, is where the leadership capacity of E-9 countries can be most effective and valuable.

Third, the South-South potential of the E-9 Initiative really does need to be looked at again. UNESCO would like to act as an umbrella under which better South-South collaboration may thrive among E-9 countries. Furthermore, serious consideration should be given to widening the impact of the Initiative beyond its specific members so that non-member countries can reap some benefits.

Fourth, I believe that the E-9 Initiative must be strongly supported by all international agencies, in particular the EFA partners.

Fifth, UNESCO shall continue to contribute to the analysis of the E-9 Initiative in terms of its record of achievements and shortcomings and its future potential. I have asked our Internal Oversight Service (IOS) to review key documents and to explore more deeply what might be the relationship between the Initiative and actual EFA achievements at the country level.

The real decision, however, is yours; namely, the E-9 countries yourselves. For the sake of the EFA movement in your countries and in the world at large, we hope that you will invest more energy and determination into the Initiative so that it becomes a more effective catalyst of EFA momentum and improvement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As in previous years, this biennial meeting has taken a specific theme as its focus of attention. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) was selected at the last meeting two years ago in Beijing. I must say that, in the perspective of post-Dakar developments, the theme of ECCE has not received the same attention as other Dakar goals such as universal primary education or gender parity and equality in education. But, as the First Lady of Egypt has stressed, there can be no disputing the importance of spreading the availability of ECCE so that it can serve as the foundation on which other aspects of EFA can be built. We need to integrate ECCE more fully into the mainstream of EFA activities. In addition, in this year when gender parity and equality in education dominated the attention of the High-Level Group and the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, the links between ECCE, girls' access to education and girls' educational performance need to be given more consideration.

In conclusion, let me say that I feel that the E-9 Initiative does need to be boosted, both within UNESCO, among E-9 countries and, more broadly, within the international community as a whole. But we need more information and more reflection to come up with the right way forward. I am assured that, through this meeting, we have begun to engage with that task. We must recognize that E-9 countries do face fresh challenges – the impact of HIV/AIDS on education was not uppermost on people’s minds ten years ago, for example. But there are, post-Dakar and post-Monterrey, fresh opportunities too.

Let me assure you that UNESCO remains committed to working with you. The E-9 group should have one of the strongest voices in the EFA movement. With better coordination, greater commitment and more sustained and continuous action, the potential of the E-9 Initiative remains high. Let us work together to ensure that the Initiative’s potential is realized in coming years.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Abdel Aziz Al Saud,  
President of the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development  
Organizations (AGFUND)**

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate,  
The First Lady of Egypt, Ms Suzanne Mubarak,  
Our friend, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),  
His Excellency, our brother, Dr Hussein Kamel Bahaa Eddine, Minister of Education,  
Excellencies,

May peace and the mercy and blessings of God be with you.

We are pleased to join together on this important occasion of this inauguration of the Fifth Ministerial Review Meeting on Education for All in the Nine High-Population (E-9) Countries, a meeting whose agenda includes subjects and issues which are crucial for this group, which constitutes approximately one half of the world's population, and which is facing a number of development challenges. In the Delhi Declaration of 1993 and at the subsequent meetings in Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil and China, the leaders of this group called for action to address the most serious of their development problems, namely high population density, through the strategy of "Education for All", which is based on an integrated set of mechanisms and methods aimed at harnessing the promising energies of the nine countries, and working to strike a balance between population growth and the available potential and resources.

Population growth and the ensuing social and economic consequences are unquestionably liabilities for the State which need to be tackled through a broad range of policies in order to alleviate the pressure. At the same time, however, there are those in the E-9 group who believe that, contrary to being a misfortune, population growth may open the door to qualitative investment. In our estimation, this new perspective is to be achieved by applying modern educational principles at the early childhood stage in order to equip the rising generations with the tools for creativity and innovation. The problems of population growth may then be tackled in creative and innovative ways, failing which they will continue to weigh heavily on the State.

The opening of the Centre for Early Childhood Development in Mubarak Educational City fortuitously coincides with the work of this Review Meeting, which is holding its fifth session on the theme of early childhood development. The fact is that everything relating to children gives us cause for happiness, for they are the springtime and embellishment of this world, and the basis and catalyst for all development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Children have been and remain a prime concern, as they are an essential conduit for all efforts aimed at ensuring genuine human development and the necessary changes for the



better. We therefore give them ample coverage in the projects run by the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), whose philosophy is predicated on the close relationship between opportunities for sustainable human development and the care provided for children and mothers by the governmental and non-governmental sections of society. The strategy pursued by AGFUND since its establishment in 1980 is focused on these two organically and crucially interrelated elements of mother and child, who constitute the majority of the population in developing societies, particularly in the Arab region. We were therefore quick to establish two institutions specializing directly in their development; the first is the Arab Council for Childhood and Development here in Cairo, and the second is the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research in Tunis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is little doubt that the early childhood stage is critical in the life of the human being, in view of its specific nature, which leaves marked impressions on the youngster's future. As you are aware, many of the child's mental, emotional and physical traits and skills are formed at this stage, during which he is highly receptive to absorption and learning, and can be deeply impressionable. The child's future is consequently dependent on the negative and positive influences on him at this stage. This corroborates the educators' maxim that "a person is what is present in his early childhood". Hence AGFUND's concern to educate children during this important stage of their lives, and our adoption of a strategy, in cooperation with UNESCO and Ministries of Education in a number of Arab States, for the establishment of a modern integrated system of kindergartens using highly developed curricula.

Apart from producing lifelong benefits for the child and guaranteeing major economic and social advantages for the nation, care and attention devoted to children during the early childhood stage strengthen the concept of a balanced upbringing that is essentially a fundamental human right. It is the right of the child that his society should provide the appropriate environment for an education that prepares him for the future and enables him to contribute to the progress of his nation, for the child is the nucleus of society, and his education constitutes the ideal investment in the future. Forming the backbone of this nucleus are health, nutrition, clean drinking water, a clean environment, and a comfortable and hygienic home, together with education and learning.

Consequently, in order to train generations which are able to keep pace with the new developments of the age and stay in tune with the future and its manifestations, which open up wide horizons, every aspiring nation should have in hand the four essential inputs of:

1. Elaborating a national strategy for early childhood development;
2. Devoting attention to education at the early childhood stage so that it becomes an integral part of the basic education stage;
3. Devoting attention to the training of heads and teachers qualified to take charge of the kindergarten stage;

4. Viewing pre-school education as the most important and fundamental stage of education and upbringing and not only – as is widely believed in some circles – as simple recreation and an aid to working mothers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The steady progress of the AGFUND projects for kindergartens and early childhood development gives cause for satisfaction. Following implementation of the project in the Gulf States, for instance, AGFUND received requests from other Arab States for extension of the experiment, in cooperation with UNESCO and Ministries of Education. At the beginning of this year, we started an early childhood development project in Egypt in collaboration with His Excellency, Dr Hussein Kamel Bahaa Eddine, and this Centre, whose inauguration we are celebrating today, is one of the beneficial results of the earnest steps taken by Egypt in the interest of children. Eight Arab States, namely Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan and Egypt, have thus far benefited from the project, and arrangements are in place with UNESCO for Sudan to do so next year.

The development of this national project in Arab countries is helped by the fact that most of those in the region have ensured that the kindergarten stage has its full place on the educational ladder, and forms an integral part of basic compulsory education. It is appropriate to mention that the AGFUND International Prize for Pioneering Development Projects has dedicated one of its three prizes next year to the subject of “Access for children to modern technology for delivering knowledge and understanding the future” and by children, we certainly mean children in all stages.

I am pleased to announce by way of this forum on education and development that we at AGFUND are ready to extend our successful partnership with UNESCO in the field of early child development to the E-9 countries and to the implementation of modern kindergarten projects in these States through mutual arrangement and coordination with Ministries of Education. We believe that your examination of this project in Egypt, which is one of the E-9 countries, will be an appropriate way of identifying how the countries in the group might benefit from the project.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is our constant affirmation that the advancement of children in our countries requires sincere determination, as there are many major and complex issues surrounding the subject that have been left to accumulate unresolved. If we do not do our utmost to solve the problems of this group, our ambitions for the future will remain limited, and our steps will falter, as we shall inevitably be continuously assailed by people whom we failed to take into consideration and to whom we attached little importance. Society will then have to deal with them and assimilate them into its educational, health and other institutions, as well as shoulder the consequences of the neglect, which may be reflected in destructive behaviour, or in fear, apprehensiveness and the inability to progress, or in a nervous disposition or a tendency to violence and a lack of consideration for others. The main

values that we believe should be instilled in our children from the early stages are those of tolerance and respect for others and the use of dialogue as a means of mutual understanding and communication. We should also keep them from fear, as fear hampers all underlying abilities and energies.

In our view, this goal will not be achieved unless our approach to children is clearly incorporated into development plans, and unless supreme councils or ministries are dedicated to children in order to save ideas and projects from lethal bureaucracy. Nor will it be achieved unless we give civil society and organizations an opportunity to share the burdens and responsibilities in this regard with governments, for these forces, which are growing worldwide, and which now exert effective influence in channelling the course of development, have great capacities to bring about change by virtue of the fact that they are rooted in principles and are based on the evolving needs and demands of society.

In conclusion, I should like to thank you all and hope that the work of the Review Meeting is successful and achieves its objectives. We also hope, God willing, that this educational centre will be a further catalyst for widespread development in Egypt. May God grant success to all, and may peace and the mercy and blessings of God be with you.

# UNESCO Note on the E-9 Initiative

November 2003

## Introduction

Ten years after the E-9 Initiative was launched in 1993, it is a timely moment to take stock and to reflect upon the Initiative's "track record" and upon the way forward. To this end, UNESCO commissioned an independent external evaluation, which was conducted during 2003. This external evaluation should be seen as just one element of evaluation within a larger evaluation process that will seek to understand what the E-9 Initiative has been and what it might yet become.

Though commissioned by UNESCO, the external evaluation should not be taken to represent UNESCO's official position on the E-9 Initiative. Indeed, UNESCO has raised a number of serious concerns regarding the execution of the external evaluation and regarding the findings, analysis, conclusions and recommendations contained in its report.

Among UNESCO's particular concerns are the over-reliance on the results of interviews and the absence of certain key dimensions of objective analysis, especially in terms of a) an examination of the original aims and unfolding development of the Initiative on the basis of a thorough document review; and b) an examination of the EFA performance of E-9 countries in the light of statistical data and other available information. The external evaluation team has been given the opportunity to review and re-work the report in response to the critical feedback from UNESCO but the team recently has decided not to do so in any significant manner. Nevertheless, in the interest of transparency and as a stimulus to further thinking and analysis, the report is being distributed in advance of the biennial E-9 Ministerial Conference being held in Cairo, Egypt, on 19-21 December 2003.

This "Note on the E-9 Initiative", which is also being distributed in the lead-up to the Cairo meeting, has been prepared with two main purposes in mind:

First, it will provide a summary overview of key developments in E-9 countries in regard to various Education for All indicators (see Annex 1). It is readily acknowledged that no direct or automatic correlation between these EFA developments and the E-9 Initiative should be drawn. Nevertheless, this snap-shot of EFA trends and related developments may suggest that, at the very least, the E-9 Initiative has not been irrelevant to EFA performance.

Second, the Note will seek to provide a framework for discussion of the E-9 Initiative at the Cairo meeting, taking into account lessons learnt from experience, changes in the national and international context of the Initiative and the range of options available to E-9 countries. Those options, it must be said, include the termination of the Initiative. Ultimately, of course, it is up to the E-9 countries themselves, individually and collectively, to decide the future of the Initiative. If they decide that the Initiative should

continue, a number of alternative ways forward are possible, and this Note seeks to identify some of them.

For its part, UNESCO's general view of the E-9 Initiative is that it manifests "unfulfilled potential". UNESCO believes that a revitalized and refocused E-9 Initiative could make an important contribution to the EFA drive leading up to 2015, but this will depend on the political will, commitment and determination of the E-9 countries themselves.

UNESCO believes that the decision-making process affecting the future of the E-9 Initiative should be as fully and accurately informed as possible. Consequently, a systematic document review pertaining to the E-9 Initiative has already been launched at the Director-General's request. This objective and thorough review will be the responsibility of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS), which will work in close consultation with the Education sector. The focus of the review will be upon the origins, objectives, character and unfolding development of the E-9 Initiative. It will also review evidence of a correlation between EFA indicators and the E-9 Initiative. A report will be made available to Member States before June 2004.

### **Re-visiting the E-9 Initiative: Ten Years After**

The E-9 Initiative was an attempt to mobilize support for and commitment to the Education for All challenge within a group of high-population countries whose performance would affect global EFA trends in significant ways. The Initiative, therefore, was 'political' in character in the sense that its aim was to stimulate, strengthen and harness the political will of a select group of Member States. Through combined advocacy, regular high-level meetings, technical workshops, joint publications, the sharing of lessons learnt and other activities, the Initiative sought to raise and maintain the profile of EFA. It had a distinctive inter-regional nature and was at once strongly thematic and country-focused.

Ten years after the Initiative was launched, a consideration of its importance and relevance would need to take several factors into account:

1. The **lessons of experience** of the past ten years; in other words, what have been the strengths and weaknesses of the E-9 Initiative? In what ways was the Initiative effective? What were its impact and benefits, and how should these be measured? Were there failures or lost opportunities? What might have been done better? The perspective of individual E-9 countries on these questions will be elicited during the Cairo meeting.
2. The **lessons of the external evaluation**. Notwithstanding its shortcomings, the external evaluation does serve to highlight certain matters that need attention: for example, the low visibility of the Initiative, especially in recent years; the weak links with EFA; the absence of an agreed framework for action or follow-up strategy.

3. **The lessons of monitoring.** Relevant and reliable evidence is vital for ascertaining the level of impact of the E-9 Initiative on EFA at the country level. Such evidence draws largely upon statistical data covering enrolment ratios, literacy rates and such like. In addition, however, other indicators need to be taken into account such as the enactment and implementation of EFA-related policy changes, new constitutional provisions or amendments in favour of EFA and the right to education, and budgetary allocations to education in general and basic education, in all its forms, in particular.
4. **Post-Dakar developments.** In addition to the Dakar Conference itself and its follow-up mechanisms (notably the High-Level Group and the Working Group on EFA), these developments include the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs; the Monterrey Conference; the Fast-Track Initiative; the annual monitoring of EFA progress through the EFA Global Monitoring Report; the important role of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics regarding the collection, analysis and publication of statistical data on EFA; the renewed emphasis on planning for EFA and poverty alleviation in the framework of UNDAFs, PRSPs and HIPC; greater acceptance of the need for donor harmonization in order to reduce the administrative burden on developing countries; the emergence of civil society as a major EFA actor on the international scene (especially the Global Campaign for Education); the importance of regional mechanisms (NEPAD, MINEDAF, PRELAC, etc.) and subregional initiatives (South Asia Forum, Central Asia, Baltic states).
5. **New and emerging threats.** These include the ravages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic; the proliferation of conflicts and complex emergencies; terrorism and deteriorating security situations.
6. **Fresh opportunities.** These include evidence of renewed political will in several E-9 countries; greater international attention to EFA through MDGs, PRSPs, the UN Literacy Decade, the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development and the forthcoming Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; EFA flagship programmes; the rich potential of ICTs and the Internet; the expansion of open and distance learning; the growing demand for education within all sections of society.
7. **The growing influence and impact of certain E-9 giants** (China, India, Brazil) on the global economy. Hence their importance for the rest of the world as potential leaders; their impact in regional forums and linguistic groups; their leadership in secondary and tertiary education; their large-scale utilization of open and distance learning; their experience and expertise in managing decentralization and governing large territories and huge populations.
8. The need to **broaden participation** by bringing in key international partners (World Bank, European Commission, UNICEF, major donors); civil society

(Global Campaign for Education; Collective Consultation of NGOs); and corporate/private sector into the framework of the E-9 Initiative.

9. The desirability of reviewing the criteria of **membership** and the associated possibilities for expanding or reducing the E-9 group.

### **Towards strengthening the South-South dimension of the E-9 Initiative**

The E-9 Initiative has considerable potential to further develop South-South links, not only among the E-9 countries but also with other developing countries. The E-9 is by definition “a club of the big” but this does not necessarily mean that the E-9 should be exclusive or that no benefits should reach non-member developing countries facing major EFA challenges. Thus, the E-9 countries should consider:

- Playing a leadership role within the EFA movement;
- Providing technical assistance to non-members of the E-9 group;
- Initiating joint programmes among E-9 countries and with/for other countries;
- Establishing and strengthening inter-institutional linkages;
- Reviewing the impact of legislative and policy change;
- Improving educational management information systems (EMIS) through ICTs;
- Facilitating the exchange of students, teachers and academics/researchers;
- Transferring knowledge (translation of important literature; free flow of electronic information; sharing of good practices);
- Encouraging corporate/private sector partnerships for investment in EFA;
- Sharing information on working with civil society partners via decentralization and participation of local communities.

Some suggestions on how to improve the administration and coordination of the E-9 Initiative

- Endow the Dakar Follow-up Unit at UNESCO HQ with the leadership and coordination function, with the benefit that this would improve the integration of the E-9 Initiative within EFA processes;
- Establish a rotating secretariat in order to enhance country ownership and more regular, direct contacts between the E-9 countries;
- Establish better links with EFA mechanisms at international and regional levels and with civil society;
- Create a peer mechanism among E-9 Member States for concurrent review and monitoring of the E-9 Initiative;
- Undertake joint research and publications on issues of mutual interest, such as ICTs in open and distance learning; the HIV/AIDS crisis in education; harnessing the benefits of economies of scale in educational provision; promoting quality education programmes for rural education.

## **Annex 1 to the UNESCO Note on the E-9 Initiative: Status and trends (1990-2000) of EFA in the E-9 countries**

*Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan.*

*In monitoring the progress towards EFA, it is important to give specific attention to the trends observed in the E-9 countries since any significant progress recorded in these countries immediately affects the world education picture. In fact, with 3.2 billion people, these countries account for more than 50 per cent of the world's population and 53 per cent of the world's school-age population. In addition, more than 40 per cent of the world's out-of-school children and 70 per cent of the world's illiterate adults are in these countries. India and China alone, with respectively 287 million and 142 million illiterate adults, account for more than half of the world's illiterate population.*

### **Population trends**

What constitutes the particularity of the E-9 countries is the educational challenge resulting from their demographic size. The size and growth of the population constitute one of the major obstacles for EFA in these nine countries, which account altogether for more than half of the world's population. Population issues are therefore seen as an important element of the strategies to achieve EFA in these countries.

The total population of the E-9 countries rose from 2.8 billion in 1990 to 3.2 billion in 2000; it is projected to reach 3.8 billion in 2015. As a main determinant of levels of socio-economic demand, this population growth has certainly increased resource constraints, particularly regarding educational infrastructure and funding.

Despite an increase in the total E-9 population, the average annual growth rate shows a deceleration, in both absolute and relative terms. This trend can be observed in seven of the nine countries, Nigeria and Pakistan being the exceptions. Although there should be a deceleration in the growth rate of the total population in the next decade, in absolute terms the average annual increment should increase in these two countries. Currently, they are the only two of the E-9 countries with an estimated annual population growth rate of 2.5 per in the period 2000-2015 (see Table 1).

### **Early childhood care and education (ECCE)**

All E-9 countries with available data have experienced significant improvements of their gross enrolment ratios (GER) in pre-primary education between 1990 and 2000, with Indonesia being the exception. In 2000, the GER in preschool ranged from 12.5 per cent in Egypt to 77 per cent in Mexico. Brazil, Mexico and Pakistan are the only countries where more than half of the eligible children are enrolled in preschool. In Bangladesh, China and India, enrolment in preschool is limited to 25 per cent of the preschool-age children. Gender parity has been achieved in all countries with data, except Pakistan where girls' GER is 46.5 per cent, as compared to 63 per cent for boys.



## **Universal primary education**

With the exception of Pakistan, all countries with data presented a GER of 100 per cent or above, thereby showing the capacity to accommodate all school-age children. While Brazil and Mexico are at the point of achieving UPE, net enrolment ratios (NER) in China, Egypt and Indonesia are over 90 per cent. In Bangladesh and India, the proportion of children of school age who are actually enrolled were, respectively, 90 per cent and 87 per cent in 2000. Pakistan is still lagging behind with a NER of 60 per cent and Nigeria has not reported recent data. It should be noted that Bangladesh, Brazil and India made very significant increases in NER over the decade. Altogether, the E-9 countries account for about 40 per cent of the total number of out-of-school children – two countries, China and India, have 24 million out-of-school children, representing nearly a quarter of world's total.

Gender parity is closely tied to universalizing primary education. In some countries of this group, gender parity in gross enrolment is already achieved (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia and Mexico) or near to be reached (Brazil and Egypt). However, very large gender disparities to the detriment of girls are found in India and Pakistan, which reported gender parity indexes of 0.83 and 0.74 respectively.

School internal efficiency is very high in China, Egypt and Indonesia, where survival rates to Grade 5 are above 95 per cent and repetition rates are far below 10 per cent. Bangladesh and India still show very low survival rates to Grade 5 of 65 per cent and 47 per cent respectively. Repetition rates are particularly serious in Brazil where 25 per cent of children enrolled in 2000 were repeaters. There are gender disparities in survival rates to Grade 5 to the detriment of boys in Bangladesh, Indonesia and, to lesser extent, in Egypt and Mexico. In Pakistan, gender disparity is in favour of boys.

## **Participation in secondary and tertiary education**

Enrolment in secondary education has increased over the past decade in all countries with data, except Pakistan. In 2000, Brazil, China, Egypt and Mexico had GERs above 60 per cent – which is the average for developing countries. In Bangladesh and India, less than half of eligible children have access to secondary education. The situation is particularly serious for Pakistan where the GER stand at 24.5 per cent. As with primary education, Brazil reported a large proportion of repeaters (18 per cent) among secondary education students.

Bangladesh, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico have already achieved gender parity in secondary education while Egypt is near to achieving it. Even with lower GERs, India and Pakistan have experienced an increase in girls' participation in secondary education over the past decade but much is needed for them to achieve gender parity. China has not recorded any visible change in its female-male enrolment ratio (GPI), which was 0.76 in 2000.

Enrolment in tertiary education also increased in all E-9 countries, though this level is still open to few students. The biggest GER, 21 per cent, found in Mexico, is below the world average GER, which is 23 per cent in 2000. Gender disparities were visible in all countries with data, except Mexico.

### **Adult literacy**

There are serious concerns regarding the prospects of eradicating adult illiteracy in the E-9 countries. In 2000, it was estimated that 71 per cent of the world's illiterate population, or 609 million adult illiterates, are in the E-9 countries. This share has remained almost constant since 1990, despite the decline recorded both in terms of the absolute number of illiterates and illiteracy rates in almost all these countries.

The estimated literacy rates in the E-9 countries range from a minimum of 40 per cent in Bangladesh to a maximum of 91 per cent in Mexico. In view of the assumption that progress towards full literacy becomes self-sustainable once a country reaches a literacy rate of 70 per cent, the problem of illiteracy seems to be particularly serious for countries such as Bangladesh (40 per cent), Egypt (55 per cent), India (57 per cent), Nigeria (64 per cent) and Pakistan (43 per cent).

Apart from Brazil and Bangladesh, women account for more than 60 per cent of adult illiterates in all the remaining countries. Brazil and, to a lesser extent Mexico, are the only E-9 countries where gender parity in literacy is a reality. The size of the current gender gap and the pace at which it has been narrowing over the past decade need particular attention and call for concrete actions to expand education for girls and women.

### **Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education**

Achieving this goal involves understanding what holds girls and boys back so that policies can be designed to overcome these obstacles and improve access to and participation in education. Urgent action is needed in countries where the gender gap is still large in primary and secondary education. An overriding priority is to tackle poverty constraints by reducing the direct and indirect cost of schooling to families and addressing the incidence of child labour. The school environment requires equal attention. Sexual violence and harassment within schools, particularly where HIV/AIDS is prevalent, need to be confronted vigorously. Revising biases in teaching materials, training teachers to be gender-aware, and working with them and parents to break taboos are essential ingredients of an "engendered" strategy.

Much more effort is needed for India and Pakistan to achieve gender parity in primary and secondary education. China also will need to make particular efforts to increase girls' participation in secondary education.

While all countries should work on improving data availability and quality as part of the strategy to achieve EFA and gender parity, Nigeria in particular should devote more effort to closing the current data gap.

## Resources and aid

In spite of stated intentions, it was often not possible to provide more public money to basic education in the 1990s, for different reasons varying from one country to another: the slow rates of economic growth; the increasing competition for funds from other worthy sectors such as health and pensions; military expenditures; the adjustment policies required by the financial and market crises at the end of the decade; and different kinds of subsidies to sectors of the economy.

In relative terms, however, it is possible to see increases in most countries both in the share of education regarding the countries' national products, and in the share of basic education within the country's education budgets (see Table 3).

It should be noted that four of the E-9 countries – Bangladesh, India, Nigeria and Pakistan – have been selected to participate in the Analytical Fast-Track, due to the large numbers of children not in school. These countries are working with the World Bank/FTI Secretariat and the donor community to address the data, policy and capacity gaps that will need to be resolved for them to be eligible for EFA grant financing support.

Table 1. Trends in population in the E-9 countries, 2000-2015.

Country	Total population				
	% of E-9 population	2000 (millions)	2015 (millions)	Annual average growth rate (in %)	
				1990-2000	2000-2015
Bangladesh	4.3	137	183	2.25	1.93
Brazil	5.3	170	201	1.42	1.12
China	39.5	1 275	1 410	0.99	0.67
Egypt	2.1	68	84	1.90	1.46
India	31.3	1 009	1 230	1.79	1.33
Indonesia	6.6	212	250	1.52	1.10
Mexico	3.1	99	119	1.74	1.25
Nigeria	3.5	114	165	2.85	2.52
Pakistan	4.4	141	204	2.55	2.49

Source: United Nations (2002). World Population Prospects. The 2000 Revision. Medium-variant projections.

Table 2. Trends in gross and net enrolment ratios in primary education by gender, 1990-2000.

Source: UNESCO (2003). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*.

	GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO (GER) IN PRIMARY								NET ENROLMENT RATIO (NER) IN PRIMARY							
	1990				2000				1990				2000			
	Total	Male	Femal	F/M	Total	Male	Femal	F/M	Total	Male	Femal	F/M	Total	Male	Femal	F/M
Bangladesh	79.6	85.2	73.6	0.86	100.2	99.7	100.9	1.01	71.1	75.7	66.2	0.87	88.9	88.1	89.7	1.02
Brazil	106.2	...	...	...	154.5	159.1	149.9	0.94	86.4	89.0	83.8	0.94	96.7	100.0	93.3	0.93
China	125.2	129.6	120.3	0.93	113.8	113.8	113.8	1.00	97.4	99.4	95.3	0.96	92.7	92.5	93.0	1.01
Egypt	93.9	101.5	85.9	0.85	99.6	102.9	96.1	0.93	85.9	92.4	79.0	0.86	92.6	94.9 **	90.3	0.95
India	98.3	111.2	84.5	0.76	101.6	110.8	91.7	0.83	...	...	...	...	85.7	93.4 *	77.4	0.83
Indonesia	114.3	115.7	112.9	0.98	110.0	111.2	108.8	0.98	96.8	98.6	94.9	0.96	92.2	92.7	91.5	0.99
Mexico	113.8	115.2	112.4	0.98	113.2	113.6	112.7	0.99	100.0	100.0	98.9	0.99	99.4	98.8	100.0	1.01
Nigeria	91.6	102.5	80.4	0.78	...	...	...	...	59.7	66.8	52.4	0.78	...	...	...	...
Pakistan	...	...	...	...	74.5	85.2	63.1	0.74	...	...	...	...	60.1	68.8 *	51.0	0.74

Table 3. Trends in adult literacy rate (15 and over) by gender, 1990-2015

Country	1990			2000			2015		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	34.2	44.3	23.7	40.0	49.4	30.2	47.2	55.7	38.3
Brazil	82.0	82.9	81.2	86.9	87.0	86.8	91.8	91.2	92.4
China	78.3	87.2	68.9	85.2	92.1	77.9	92.9	96.8	88.9
Egypt	47.1	60.4	33.6	55.3	66.6	43.8	65.9	74.0	57.7
India	49.3	61.9	35.9	57.2	68.4	45.4	67.9	76.5	58.9
Indonesia	79.5	86.7	72.5	86.8	91.8	81.9	93.6	96.1	91.1
Mexico	87.3	90.6	84.3	91.2	93.3	89.1	94.8	96.0	93.7
Nigeria	48.7	59.4	38.4	64.0	72.2	56.1	81.4	85.9	77.1
Pakistan	35.4	49.3	20.1	43.2	57.4	27.9	55.3	68.4	41.6

Source: UNESCO (2003). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*.

Table 4. Trends in education finance in the E-9 countries, 1990-2000

EDUCATION FINANCE						
Country	Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP		Total public expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure		Public current expenditure on primary education per school pupil (unit cost) in current US\$	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
	Bangladesh	1.5	2.5	10.3	15.7	...
Brazil	...	4.0	...	10.4	...	354.3
China	2.3	...	12.8	...	...	...
Egypt	4.0	...	...	...	...	...
India	3.6	4.1	12.2	12.7	...	46.9 **
Indonesia	1.0	1.6	...	9.6	...	27.4 **
Mexico	3.7	4.5	12.8	22.6	...	566.8 **
Nigeria	1.0	...	...	...	...	...
Pakistan	2.7	1.8	**	7.4	7.8	**

Source: UNESCO (2003), *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*.

# **Early Childhood Care and Education in E-9 Countries: Status and Outlook**

Education Sector, UNESCO, Paris

## **Executive Summary**

### **EFA and ECCE**

The 1990 Jomtien Declaration stated that *learning begins at birth*, and embraced early childhood care and education (ECCE) as being within the purview of basic education. The Declaration, however, contributed little to the expansion of ECCE in countries. Ten years later, the world community renewed its commitment to ECCE in the Dakar Framework for Action, whose first goal is to expand access, improve quality and ensure equity in ECCE.

### **E-9 Countries' Commitment to ECCE**

All nine countries have shown a clear awareness of the need to embrace ECCE within government policy and legislative frameworks. This encouraging development is attributed, in part, to global initiatives on children, among which the Convention on the Rights of the Child and EFA have wielded the greatest influence. The individual countries have also launched key initiatives drawing on national determination and political support. Nevertheless these frameworks have yet to produce concrete actions.

### **The Need and Demand for ECCE**

As population growth and fertility rates decrease, fewer children will be requiring ECCE service in the E-9 countries in the future. This will allow the governments in due course to devote attention to improving quality. Demand for ECCE services in urban centres is likely to increase in all the E-9 countries, but in those where women work mainly in the informal sector, mothers will continue to have difficulty translating their needs into demands requiring government attention. The overall health and nutrition status of the child is improving in the E-9 countries, but they remain far from fulfilling their commitment to the “learning begins at birth” vision in terms of promoting early learning opportunities. In some countries, a low literacy rate among women poses a particular challenge in mobilizing them as key caretakers of young children.

### **Authorities Responsible**

Policy-makers in the E-9 countries have not yet taken clear decisions regarding sectoral leadership for ECCE, leaving different ministries responsible with no age-wise coordination or integration. The involvement of the education sector tends to start from 3 or 4 years, not at birth. Across different levels of administration, a decentralisation policy is firmly in place in all nine countries, with the provision of services mainly the responsibility of local authorities.

### **Types of Services and Participation**

Pre-primary education for children over 3, being formal and structured, is the crux of a country's system as it builds for ECCE. But expansion is slow, and provision is prone to

inequity. Integrated health-related services are widespread and prove especially useful in countries where survival health and nutrition issues are still paramount. Social ECCE services for working mothers are not very well developed in the E-9 countries; and because of their fee-paying scheme, they are often taken up by middle-class mothers or working mothers with privileged access to public childcare services. The average gross enrolment ratio of pre-primary education in the E-9 countries is 32 per cent.

### **Funding**

Government investment in ECCE is small and insufficient. Where there are investments, inefficiencies point to the need for critical examination to uncover possible policy and system faults. The education sector's investment in ECCE is particularly limited. Contributions from non-public sources are encouraged, but concrete measures to implement this policy are absent.

### **Training**

Formal qualification requirements exist mainly for educators working in education services. Most of the E-9 countries require pre-primary educators to obtain a tertiary degree. In some of the countries, pre-primary education has a higher teacher-student ratio than primary education, raising the question of quality in pre-primary education. Training opportunities for non-formal and informal educators are scanty and not systematized. The use of trained formal educators for the training of non-formal and informal educators is being piloted to overcome this challenge.

### **Curriculum**

Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan have national curricula for pre-primary education. Bangladesh and Mexico are developing one. In the case of Mexico, it will be a comprehensive curriculum for 0-6-year-olds. The curricula and pedagogical guidelines are meant to emphasize the child's holistic development. But in reality, the emphasis in pre-primary education is on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Insufficient attention is paid to the pedagogical framework of non-formal services and services for children under three.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation systems for ECCE services are not well developed in the E-9 countries. Government officials and professionals frequently disagree over what to monitor and evaluate. But the absence of a system is only part of the problem; the greater challenge is to implement existing norms and standards and use the results of evaluations to devise corrective measures. The lack of administrative and data-collecting systems to map various services in the non-public sector hinders the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems. In Brazil and Mexico, efforts are under way to develop relevant indicators and statistical data.

### **The Issue of Cross-Sectoral Coordination**

Little effort has been made to tackle the problem of sectoral fragmentation and duplication in ECCE. Even the establishment of coordination mechanisms has been

fragmented, with different sectors creating and supporting different mechanisms. EFA coordination bodies have been ineffective. Extended responsibility of the education sector for 0-6-year-olds in Brazil and Mexico is the closest example of integration. With the exception of China, few countries have tried to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of different sectors for ECCE. Determination is lacking to address the problem of fragmentation and to take decisions on identifying the lead section for ECCE.

### **EFA National Plans for ECCE**

All E-9 countries have developed EFA national plans for ECCE. Concerning access, the focus is on expanding early childhood education services for children over 3. As for quality, the approach is to improve the pedagogical aspects of services (e.g., curriculum, training, qualifications); relatively little attention is spared for improving sectoral coordination. Equity is an important policy issue in all E-9 countries, but it receives little more than lip service. Inequitable access and provision are likely to continue posing challenges in most E-9 countries.

### **Priority Tasks**

The governments need to build administration systems to support and guide non-public services. Second, they should make more concerted efforts to address the problem of sectoral fragmentation in ECCE. A crucial first step is to take a national decision on the lead sector for ECCE. Finally, resources are needed for the implementation of EFA plans for ECCE once they are developed. While resources should be mobilized from all stakeholders, government investment in ECCE should be increased. At the same time, ECCE should be supported as part of the country's synergistic efforts to achieve other EFA goals, given ECCE's rippling effects on other EFA goals. It should also be included in the country's poverty reduction strategy, given that investment in ECCE is an effective way of removing the roots of poverty at the start.



**The Fifth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting**  
**19-21 December 2003**  
**Mena House Hotel, Cairo, Egypt**

**FRIDAY, 19 DECEMBER**

8:30 – 9.00 am                      Registration

**Expert meeting on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

An exchange of national experiences and analyses (20 minutes per presentation), taking account of international trends as examined in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*

9.00 – 9:15 am                      **Introduction**  
(Chaired by the Minister or his representative of the Host Country)

9:15 – 9:30 am                      **Elections** (Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Rapporteur, Drafting Committee)

**9:30 am– 12:30 pm                      Country presentations on achievements in ECCE**

9:30 – 10:00                      National presentations by *Bangladesh, Brazil*

10:00 – 10:15                      **Coffee break**

10:15 – 11:00                      National presentations by *China, Egypt, AGFUND*

11:00 – 11:45                      Discussion

*11:45 – 12:30 pm                      National presentations by India, Indonesia, Mexico*

12:30 – 2.00 pm                      **Lunch**

**2.00 – 4.00 pm                      Country presentations (continued)**

*2.00 – 2.40 pm                      National presentations by Nigeria, Pakistan*

2.40 –3.40 pm                      Discussion and key outcomes of country presentations

**3.40 – 5.00 pm                      Private Session for Senior Officials**  
(Chaired by the Assistant Director-General for Education, ADG/ED)  
Discussion on the future strategy of the E-9 Initiative in the light of experience and progress during the past 10 years. The session, open to the country delegations only, will examine the results of the recent external evaluation on the E-9 Initiative.

5.00 – 7:30 pm                      **Cultural event (Ministry of Education of Egypt)**

**8:30 pm                      Dinner Reception hosted by the Minister of Education**

## **SATURDAY, 20 DECEMBER**

8:15/8:30 am Departure from hotel to Mubarak Education City

### **SESSION I: Opening of Ministerial Review Meeting**

- 9 – 9:45 am **Opening ceremony of the Ministerial Meeting**  
Speeches by: Minister of Education of Egypt  
Prince Talal Ben Abdel Aziz (AGFUND)  
Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director-General  
Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of Egypt
- 9:45 – 10:45 am **Inauguration ceremony of the Early Childhood Development Centre followed by Formal Reception (Ministry of Education of Egypt)**
- 10:45 – 11.00 am **Return to Hotel**
- 11.00 – 11:15 am **Elections** (Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Rapporteur)

### **SESSION II: The future strategy of the E-9 Initiative in light of the EFA challenge**

Taking account of Member States' own 10-year experience of the E-9 Initiative, the external evaluation and the outcomes of the Private Session for Senior Officials, this session will focus on three main questions:

- a) What are the lessons of experience? *What worked? What were the benefits? What else might have been done? What could have been done better?*
- b) How should the E-9 Initiative be organized in future? *Beyond biennial ministerial meetings, what activities should increasingly be undertaken? Should a rotational secretariat be instituted? How might the E-9 Initiative enhance South-South cooperation for the benefit of EFA within E-9 countries and beyond? How might agencies other than UNESCO become more involved in the Initiative?*
- c) How can the E-9 Initiative better serve the goals of EFA and their achievement? *In what ways can the E-9 Initiative bring added value to the EFA drive? How can the E-9 countries, whose performance is vital for achieving the Dakar goals, accelerate and extend their EFA actions?*

11:15 am – 1.00 pm Summary of outcomes of the Private Session for Senior Officials by ADG/ED

Statements (10 minutes per presentation) by the E-9 Ministers

1.00 – 3.00 pm **Working Lunch for Ministers hosted by the Director-General (Theme: the future of the E-9 Initiative)**

3.00 – 4.00 pm Statements by the E-9 Ministers (continued)

Discussion

### **SESSION III: Review of EFA progress in the E-9 countries**

4.00 – 6.00 p.m. Short introduction by the Director-General  
UNESCO ADG/ED introduces the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*, with particular attention to its findings and analysis concerning gender equity and equality in education and taking account of the Communiqué agreed at the High-Level Group meeting in New Delhi (November 2003).

- 6.00 – 7:30 pm            **Meeting of Drafting Group on the preparation of the draft E-9 Communiqué**
- 7:30 – 8:30 pm            **Cultural events (Ministry of Education of Egypt)**
- 9 pm                         **Dinner reception hosted by the Minister of Education of Egypt**

**SUNDAY, 21 DECEMBER**

**SESSION IV: ECCE and Education for All (EFA)**

- 9.00 – 10.00 am            **Presentation/discussion of a synthesis report on ECCE and outcomes of the expert meeting**
- 10.00 – 12.30            **Ministerial discussion of ECCE in the context of EFA**
- Taking account of the findings and analyses provided by the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*, discussion will focus on three main issues:
- a) What priority should be given to ECCE? *Discussion will examine the most fundamental problem in ECCE: low public investment. Focus will be placed on the “reality constraints” that prevent governments, particularly the education sector, from giving policy and investment attention to ECCE. Urban/rural and public/private disparities will be considered.*
  - b) Is ECCE receiving enough attention in the EFA drive? *Discussion will consider the place of ECCE within the conceptualization and implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action.*
  - c) What is the role of the education sector in ECCE? *How can cross-sectoral policy coordination for ECCE best be achieved? What are the roles and responsibilities of the education sector towards ECCE?*
- 12:30 – 2.30 pm            **Lunch (finalization of the Draft Communiqué)**

**Session V: Discussion and Adoption of the Draft Communiqué**

- 3.00 – 5.00 pm            Presentation of key outcomes and recommendations (Rapporteur)  
Presentation and discussion of the Draft Communiqué  
Adoption of the Draft Communiqué

**Session VI: Concluding Session**

- 5.00 – 6.00 pm            **Concluding remarks** of Minister of Education of Egypt, Director-General of UNESCO, and Representative of the E-9 country hosting the next meeting
- 6.00 – 6.30 pm            **Press conference (UNESCO)**
- 7:30 pm                     **Farewell dinner hosted by the Director-General of UNESCO**

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