DRAFT

Report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the Annual Ministerial Review:

Implementing
the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in Regard to Education

Draft 1
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Note: This report provides a succinct overview of progress towards the internationally agreed development goals related to education. It represents the first draft of the main report of the Secretary General to be presented at the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) being organized by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and which will be held in Geneva in July 2011. This first version of the report has been prepared by UNESCO based on an outline collectively developed through a consultative process with sister agencies coordinated by the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) in New York. It is being circulated for further input before a revised version is submitted to DESA for finalization and validation before being presentation at the AMR in July 2011.

Table of Contents

Abstract

The report begins by highlighting the inter linkages between education, health, poverty and hunger reduction, and gender within the MDG framework. As a catalyst for reaching other development goals, it is argued that the goals of Universal Primary Education (UPE) must be examined in a holisitic manner within the content of the broader Education for All (EFA) framework. Section II examines trends in achieving international education goals, going beyond UPE, to consider the issues of youth and adult literacy, and gender equality at various levels of education. In doing so, the overview focuses on inequalities and inequities in education across and within countries, and among the most excluded segments of society. The case is made that, while significant progress has been observed, the pace of change is too slow to reach the international education-related development goals by 2015. The section that follows (III) then examines the crucial issue of the quality of education, examining gaps across and within countries and issues of teacher shortage and deployment. Section IV then reviews some of the measures which have proved effective in overcoming inequality in access and participation in education, as well as in a more equitable distribution of higher levels of learning outcomes. It demonstrates that effective strategies aligned with the right to education standards and principles exist to equalize opportunity in educational access, participation and outcomes, and that improvements in both quality and equity can be made at low cost. The issue of mobilizing resources for education, particularly within the context of the economic and financial crisis, makes the case, not only for safeguarding aid to education and aid effectiveness, but also of maintaining levels of domestic public investment and increasing efficiency in their use (Section V). The final section (VI) charts the way forward and proposes a set of recommendations related to more integrated and holistic approaches to the MDGs, the need for greater policy coherence across sectors, the need to adopt a broader vision of education for development, to expand partnerships, to increase funding and to ensure more efficient and equitable distribution of resources, to focus on equity and the need to improve the working conditions and training of teachers.

I. Introduction

The MDG Framework

The MDG framework adopted in 2000 represents a "milestone in international cooperation"[1] and an "unprecedented global consensus"[2] about poverty reduction through the definition of measures and targets set for 2015 to increase incomes, reduce hunger, achieve universal primary education, eliminate gender inequality, reduce maternal and child mortality, reverse the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria, prevent the loss of natural resources and biodiversity, and improve access to water, sanitation and decent housing.[3] Two of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) relate directly to education: (1) MDG Target 2.A that aims to "Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling"; and (2) MDG Target 3.A which aims to "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education levels no later than 2015". These MDG targets overlap with two of the Education for All (EFA) goals adopted earlier the same year at the World Education Forum in Dakar.[4]

Overview of progress towards the MDGs

The comprehensive review of progress towards reaching the MDGs prepared for the 2010 World Development Summit points to a mixed record of results since 2000.[5] The report states that "many countries were moving forward, including some of the poorest", but that "unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, and insufficient dedication to sustainable development have created shortfalls in many areas." Overall progress has thus been described as "uneven", and it is estimated that "without a major push forward, many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed in most regions." Overall progress towards the MDGs has been described in the following terms:

> Whereas MDG 1 (eradiation of extreme poverty and hunger) is on course to be achieved and "remarkable improvements" have been made regarding MDG 6 (combating of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases), insufficient progress has been made towards achievement of MDG 2 (provision of universal primary education), MDG 4 (reduction of child mortality), and MDG 5 (reduction of maternal mortality). Steps towards MDG 3 (promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women) have been labelled "sluggish"; "alarmingly" high rates of deforestation are hampering MDG 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability); and Africa is "short-changed" by the aid flows included under MDG 8 (development of a global partnership for development).[6]

"The broad conclusion is that few goals are on track globally, and those that are show substantial variation, with least progress in Africa and often South Asia."[7] This is all the more worrying in a global context characterised by "persistent or even increasing inequalities between the rich and the poor" and where "old and new challenges threaten to further slow progress in some areas or

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[1] The MDG Report (2010: 3).
[2] See interdisciplinary analysis of the cross-cutting challenges in the implementation of the MDGs by the London International Development Centre Commission summarised the Lancet (2010: 1).
[3] See Annex 1 for goals, targets and corresponding indicators for the 8 MDGs.
[4] When considering education-related MDGs, in particular Target 2.A related to universal primary education, and Target 3.A relative to gender parity in education, they "might best be viewed (…) as reinforcing, rather than driving, the targeting and mobilisation of resources" the education goals set with the international agenda initially at Jomtien (1999), and later in Dakar (2000). Lancet (2010: 6).
[5] The MDG Report (2010).
[6] The Lancet (2010: 2).
[7] Idem.

even undo successes achieved so far." Indeed, the direct and indirect impact of armed conflict, of climate change, of the food price crisis, as well as of the global financial and economic crisis, is highest on the most vulnerable segments of societies worldwide.

Education as a catalyst for all MDGs

The 2010 MDG Summit outcome document clearly reaffirms the important role of education as a catalyst for achieving all MDGs. In providing an overview of the relation between education and other development goals, it is indeed essential to highlight the interconnectedness of *all* development goals. Figure 1 below highlights the key inter-linkages between education, health, poverty reduction, and gender equality, and the way in which improvement in one area has a positive effect on the others. More specifically, the shaded row illustrates how improvement in primary education (MDG 2) has positive effects on health (MDGs 4, 5 and 6), poverty reduction and elimination of hunger (MDG 1), as well as on gender equality (MDG 3). Likewise, the shaded column highlights how improvements in health, poverty and hunger reduction, as well as in gender equality each, in turn, have a positive effect on education.

Figure 1: Positive, reinforcing links between education, health, gender, and poverty and hunger reduction

	Effect on education	Effect on health	Effect on poverty and hunger reduction	Effect on gender equality
Improvement in education	...	Encourages good health practices, delays marriage, reduces fertility and child mortality, and improves maternal health; primary education provides access to secondary and post-secondary education and skilled health workers	Improves agricultural productivity and off-farm employment opportunities; primary education provides access to secondary and post-secondary education and generates skilled workforces	Improves learning and progression for all children
Improvement in health	Increase initial enrolment, daily attendance, progression, and learning achievement	...	Increase fitness and productivity and reduces cost of health care	Improves wellbeing for women and girls, enabling them to participate fully (ie, politically, economically, socially and culturally)
Improvement in poverty and hunger reduction	Increase initial enrolment, daily attendance, progression, and learning achievement	Improves nutrition and creates resources to pay for health care	...	Improves women's health and status, and, therefore, their capacity to contribute to establishing gender-equitable social relations politically, economically, socially and culturally
Improvement in gender equality	Improves relationships developed in schools between girls and boys; effectively teaches social values and creates a safer environment for all children	Improves treatment given to women and men; protects women against health risks associated with gender-based violence; improves care for mothers and newborn children and nutrition of families	Improves nutrition and work opportunities for women and men; ensures care economy adequately supported	…

Source: Lancet (2010: 10).

Because the interactions between education, poverty reduction, health and gender are complex and reciprocal, the goal of Universal Primary Education (MDG 2) cannot be seen in isolation. Higher levels of education outcomes are both a condition for, as well as a result of, progress in MDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Having said this, as a contribution to progress in poverty reduction, health, and gender equality, the goal of achieving universal primary education must be seen as a

necessary, condition for progress in other MDGs. The positive impact of investment in education on poverty reduction and overall human development has been well documented for some time. Indeed, whether framed in terms of increased rural productivity and urban self employment[8], higher levels of earnings, lowered fertility[9], better diet and earlier and effective diagnosis of illness[10], better child health care (particularly through higher levels of female education), or longer life expectancy, there is an important body of literature accumulated on the positive developmental impact of primary education.

Yet, if universal primary education is a condition for reducing poverty and hunger, improving health and promoting gender equality, it may be argued that it is insufficient, in itself, as an education goal. While it has traditionally been agreed that economic rates of return to individuals' and society's investments in education are highest at the primary level[11], it can be argued that the fact that MDG 2 is an important catalyst for reaching other development goals is precisely because it provides access to post-primary levels of education and training that impact significantly on other dimensions of development:

> … by targeting largely primary education, MDG 2 underdevelops secondary and tertiary education, for which opportunities to create substantial improvements in incomes and health are greatest. These educational levels also generate skilled workers that are needed to promote and service the non-education MDGs – in health, agriculture, water and sanitation, and environmental sustainability – and teachers for the achievement of MDG 2.[12]

This somewhat narrow conceptualisation of education within the MDG framework limits possibilities of increased impact of the role of education in achieving a wider range of development goals. In accelerating progress towards the MDGs, it is thus essential to continue to pursue the broader international agenda for the development of education as defined in the Dakar Education for All Framework for Action adopted in 2000. While the important role of education as a catalyst for achieving all development goals is clearly acknowledged in the MDG framework, Universal Primary Education (UPE), as articulated in MDG Target 2.A, cannot suffice, in itself, as an educational goal and catalyst to achieve other development goals. In reviewing progress towards the MDG targets of UPE and gender parity in education, it is therefore important to consider the broader EFA goals.

II. Trends in achieving universal basic education

Universal Primary Education (UPE)

MDG Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

EFA Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

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[8] See, for example; Lockheed, Jamison & Lau (1980); Psacharapoulos (1981); Lau, Jamison & Louat (1991).
[9] See, for example, Cochrane (1979) and Holsinger & Kasarda (1975). It is to be noted that others have argued that education generally seems to have a significant impact on fertility only as of the level of secondary education when it begins to influence age of marriage and the use of contraceptives (see Hugon 1995).
[10] Cochrane, Leslie & O'Hara (1982).
[11] REF
[12] Lancet (2010: 9).

While the MDG and EFA goals relative to UPE largely overlap, the latter reinforces two important dimensions. The first dimension is that of equal opportunity, particularly for those most at risk of marginalization as a result of discrimination based on gender, minority status or the difficult circumstances they live in. The second important dimension is that of the right to free primary education for all and the subsequent obligation of the State to provide for it in a non-discriminatory manner. This right is enshrined in a number of international normative frameworks[13], as well as in national legislation relative to compulsory schooling adopted in the vast majority of countries.[14] EFA Goal 2 thus reinforces MDG Target 2.A making it more consistent with the right to education standards and principles, and consequently, with the pursuit of social justice in and through education essential for sustainable development.

Access to, and participation in, primary education may be measured through such indicators as Net Enrolment Ratios (NER)[15] and primary completion rates.[16] The third indicator proposed in the MDG framework - that of the youth (15-24) literacy rate - goes beyond the issues of access and participation and attempts to capture the results of primary education in terms of the acquisition of sustainable literacy (and numeracy) skills. This third indicator links well with the broader set of EFA goals that are also reviewed in this section; in particular, those relative to the reduction of literacy among youth and adults (EFA Goal 4), as well as to the improvement of the quality of education (EFA Goal 6).

Enrolment in primary education

Compared with the 'lost decade' of the 1990s, the period since 2000 has been one of "rapid progress" towards universal primary education; a period during which some of the poorest countries have "dramatically increased enrolment, narrowed gender gaps and extended opportunities to disadvantaged groups".[17] "Major advances have been made even in some of the poorest countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa."[18] Analysis of primary NER indicate that the most rapid rate of increase since 2000 is observed in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and North Africa. Indeed, several sub-Saharan African countries have made spectacular progress in a short period of time. Tanzania, for instance, raised its NER from under 50% in 1999 to over 95% in 2007, while Benin and Guinea raised NER from under 50% to 80% and over 70% respectively. Even countries such as Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Niger, which reported extremely low levels of enrolment of under 20% in 1999, more than doubled their ratios by 2007. Overall, most countries have been making progress with a significant number of them on track to reaching universal primary education by 2015 (see Figure 2).

However, while "enrolment in primary education has continued to rise, reaching 89 per cent in the developing world (...) the pace of progress is insufficient to ensure that, by 2015, all girls and boys, complete a full course of primary education".[19] Moreover, while most countries improved their primary school enrolment rates between 1999 and 2007, some have actually fallen behind.

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[13] The fundamental tight to education is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26), the International Convenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 13), as well as in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[14] It is estimated that 90% of the world's countries have legally-binding regulations requiring children to attend school (UIS 2009).

[15] NER is defined as the number of pupils of the theoretical school age for primary education enrolled in either primary or secondary school, expressed as a percentage of the total percentage of that age group.

[16] The completion rate measures the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary.

[17] GMR (2010: 55).

[18] MDG Report (2010: 17).

[19] MDG Report (2010: 16).

This declining trend is most worrying in the Occupied Palestinian Territory where NER has been reported to have plummeted from over 95% in 1999 to less than 75% in 2007. Similarly, in Equatorial Guinea, primary NER has deteriorated from almost 90% to under 65% over the same period. As a result, the 2010 MDG Report concludes that "hope dims for universal education by 2015, even as many poor countries make tremendous strides."[20]

Figure 2: **Change in net enrolment ratios in primary education (1999-2007)**
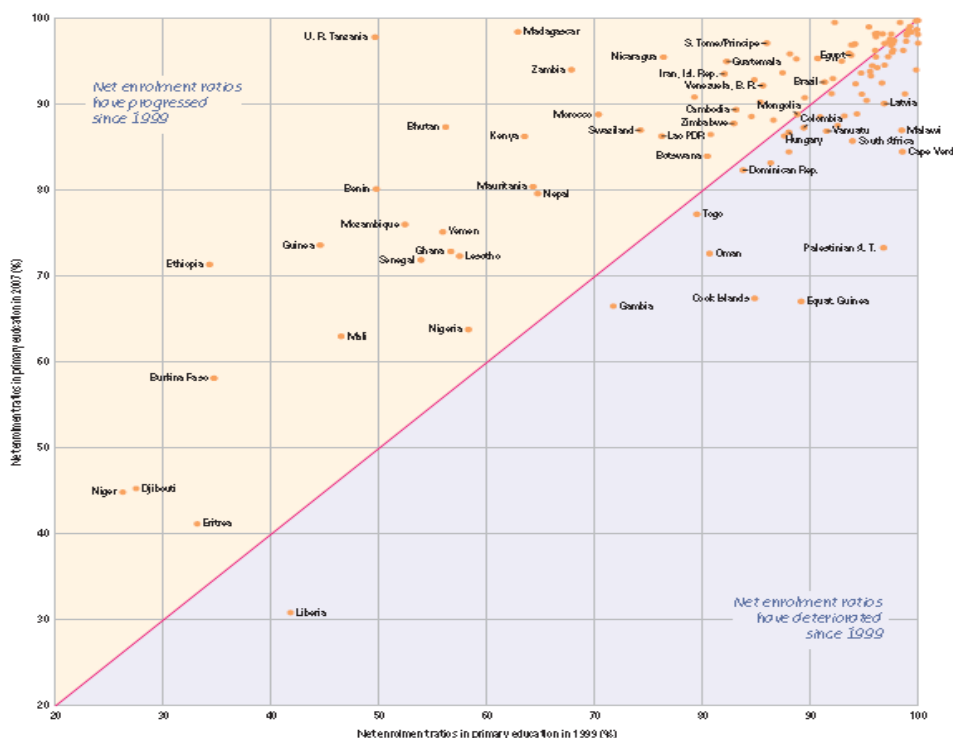
Source: UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, (2010: 63).

Completion of the primary education cycle

Beyond access and attendance, it is important to ensure that children complete the full cycle of primary education which is a necessary, albeit sometimes insufficient, condition for the acquisition of sustainable literacy skills. Indeed, despite the progress in enrolment observed since 2000, millions of children and are still leaving school without having completed the full course of the primary education cycle, and are not acquiring basic literacy, numeracy and essential learning tools. Patterns of school dropout remain high, in particular in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 30 per cent of primary-school students leave before having reached the last grade of primary. In some countries such as Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, and Togo, less than half of the children enrolled reach the last grade of primary, while in Uganda, the rate is as low as 25%.[21] Causes for school drop out include both direct and indirect costs of schooling; poor quality of education and low perceived relevance; supply factors such as lack of schools and/or distance away from school, especially for girls and adolescents, where school attendance is further challenged by gender-related health and safety issues. As progress is being

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[20] Idem.
[21] UNESCO (2010) GMR.

made in enrolment, efforts are still required, in many contexts, to improve retention in primary schooling and ensure completion of the full primary education cycle.

Out-of-school children and adolescents

Incomplete access to, and early drop out from primary education continue to deny many children from right to basic education. Worldwide progress in primary enrolment since 2000, however, has reduced the absolute number of out-of-school children from an estimated 105 million children in 1999 to 72 million in 2007 (see Figure 3).[22] In India alone, the number of out-of-school children was reduced in a spectacular manner by 15 million in just two years after the 2001 launch of the universal primary education program.[23]

Figure 3: **Trends in numbers of out-of-school children projected to 2015**
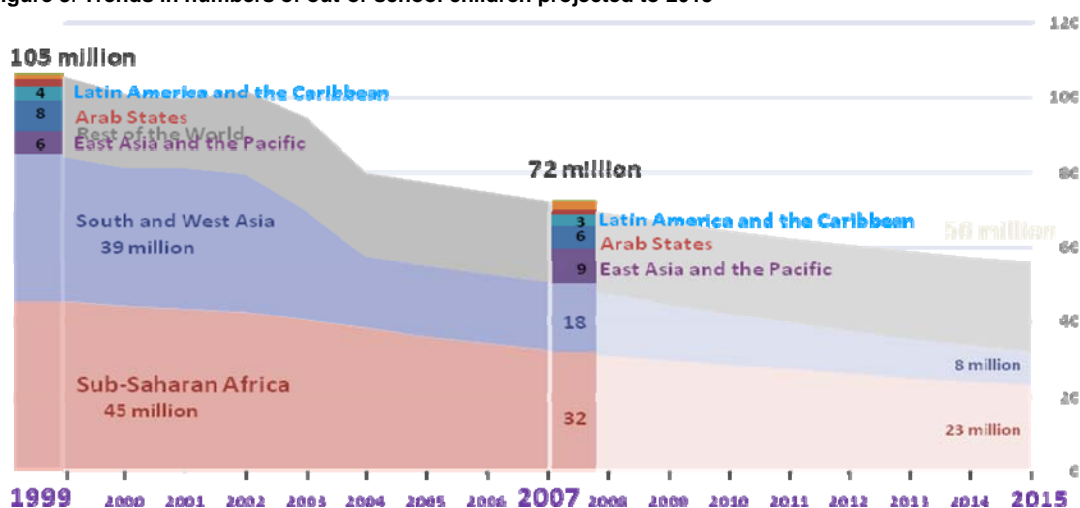
Source: UNESCO (2010). Global Monitoring Report.

Despite the progress however, the population of out-of-school children worldwide remains high, with close to half of all these children concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa (32 million) and a quarter in South and West Asia (18 million). In 2007, a quarter of all primary school-age children in sub-Saharan Africa were out of school. It is also estimated that over a third of out-of-school children live in low-income countries affected by conflict, such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. An estimated 40 million of those children denied schooling have a disability. Furthermore, girls remain disproportionately represented among those out of school, as do child laborers, and children living in slums and rural areas. Marginalized as they are as a result of a combination of factors, these children are the most difficult to reach. The sheer size of this global population of out-of-school children is all the more disturbing that it does not account for more than 70 million additional adolescents of lower secondary school age who are currently out of school, and among whom, many have not completed a cycle of primary education.[24]

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[22] UNICEF estimates are much higher putting the figure at some 100 million out-of-school children. UNICEF (2010). *Progress for Children: Achieving the MDGs with Equity*. Number 9, September 2010.
[23] GMR (2010: 56).
[24] UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2010). *Out-of-School adolescents*. Montreal. Note that the World Bank figure for 2005 is much higher at 120 million.

Youth and adult literacy

> **EFA Goal 4**: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

The youth literacy rate among 15 to 24 year-olds is a useful indicator to measure progress towards the UPE target as it provides information on the effectiveness of primary education in producing desired basic learning outcomes and the sustainable acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. These literacy skills constitute basic "learning tools" and represent an essential component of the broader notion of basic learning needs,[25] and on which further learning and training may be accessed. Incomplete and inequitable access to education, patterns of drop out, and poor levels of learning in primary schooling all contribute to reproducing illiteracy among young adults. Universal completion of primary education of good quality is thus intimately linked to the somewhat neglected EFA Goal 4 which aims to improve levels of adult literacy by 2015.

A comparison of data between the 1985-1994 and 2000-2007 periods indicates that the rate of adult literacy has increased from 68% to 80% worldwide with most rapid progress observed in South and West Asia (+16%) and the Arab States (+13%), particularly in countries such as Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, and Nepal. Having said this, the bulk of the estimated 760 million non-literate youth and adults[26] are concentrated in the high population (E9) countries of Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Moreover, disparities persist across regions and countries. In the sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, where the overall rate of literacy is the lowest of all regions (62 %), rates vary from over 90% in the Seychelles and Zimbabwe, to less than 30% in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Niger.

Figure 4: Youth (15-24) literacy rates (%)

Region	1985-1994			2000-2007		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Arab States	76	84	67	87	91	82
Central and Eastern Europe	98	99	97	99	99	98
Central Asia	100	100	100	99	99	100
East Asia and the Pacific	95	97	93	98	98	98
East Asia	95	97	93	98	98	98
Pacific	92	93	92	91	90	91
Latin America/Caribbean	94	93	94	97	97	97
Caribbean	78	75	81	87	83	91
Latin America	94	94	95	97	97	98
N. America/W. Europe	100	100	100	100	100	100
South and West Asia	61	72	49	80	85	75
Sub-Saharan Africa	64	70	58	72	77	68
World	84	88	79	89	91	87

Source: UNESCO (2010) Global Monitoring Report, based on UNESCO Institute of Statistics database (UIS, 2009).
Note: Data for 2000-2007 are for the most recent date available for the period specified.

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[25] "Basic learning needs comprise both essential learning tools and the basic learning content required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning." *World Declaration on Education for All* (Article 1, Paragraph 1). Jomtien (1990).

[26] While the absolute number of non-literate adults decreased worldwide from some 870 million (in the 1985-1994 period) to some 760 million (during 2000-2007), the numbers have actually increased in over 20 countries, half of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. UIS data reported in GMR 201. See also Report of the Director General of UNESCO (July 2010): Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United States Literacy Decade.

Within this overall context, the level of educational attainment of young adults is a strategic consideration for any discussion on development. An overview of trends over the past two decades clearly shows significant progress in reducing the share of youth who are non-literate, particularly in South and West Africa, as well as in the Arab States, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa[27] (see Figure 4). Moreover, significant progress can also be observed in the narrowing of the gender gap in youth literacy rates in South and West Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States[28]. Despite this progress, however, the most recent data available by region point to persistent disparities in some regions with over one quarter of youth and one fifth, respectively in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, still deprived of basic literacy skills. It is also within these poorer regions that significant gender gaps to the disadvantage of girls may still be observed.

Gender Equality in Education

MDG Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

EFA Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Significant progress towards gender parity in primary education

Gender is a traditional factor of inequality and disparity in education. Having said this, there has been significant progress in achieving parity and/or narrowing the gap around the world. Indeed, gender parity in primary education has been achieved in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Western Europe. Developing regions, on the whole, are also approaching gender parity in primary education, and significant progress has been made in narrowing the gender gap, particularly in South and West Asia, and, to a lesser degree, in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States (see Figure 5). While South and West Asia reported the widest gender gap in primary education, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in primary education has been improved from a low 0.84 % to 0.96 % in less than ten years.

Despite significant progress made in closing the gender gap in primary education, however, the fact remains that the majority of out-of-school children are still girls. Moreover, while the absolute numbers of out-of-school children of primary school age have decreased in all regions, the share of girls among these has surprisingly increased in the Arab States and in Central Asia. It thus appears important to better understand the way in which gender combines with other factors of vulnerability in order to reach the most marginalised children who are being left behind, despite the general progress observed towards universalising access to primary education and narrowing the gender gap.

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[27] Progress in overall youth literacy rates over the past 10-20 years indicates a 19 percentage point increase for South and West Asia, 11 points for the Arab States, 9 points for the Caribbean and 8 points for sub-Saharan Africa.
[28] One important exception to this pattern is the Caribbean region where the traditional gender gap to the disadvantage of young men is widening. This widening gap merits further investigation. Elsewhere, in regions such as Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, East Asia and Latin America, gender parity has been achieved in literacy rates among youth.

Figure 5: **Gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary education**

Regions	Primary Education				Secondary Education		Tertiary Education	
	Net Enrolment Ratio		Out-of-school children		Gross Enrolment Ratio		Gross Enrolment Ratio	
	GPI (%)		% Female		GPI (%)		GPI (%)	
	1999	2007	1999	2007	1999	2007	1999	2007
Arab States	0.90	0.92	59	61	0.89	0.92	0.74	1.05
Central and Eastern Europe	0.97	0.99	59	52	0.98	0.96	1.18	1.25
Central Asia	0.99	0.98	50	58	0.99	0.98	0.93	1.10
East Asia and the Pacific	1.00	1.00	52	48	0.96	1.01	0.75	1.00
East Asia	1.00	1.00	52	48	0.96	1.01	0.73	0.99
Pacific	0.98	0.97	54	52	0.99	0.96	1.24	1.31
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.98	1.00	54	50	1.07	1.08	1.12	1.19
Caribbean	0.97	0.97	50	51	1.03	1.03	1.30	1.36
Latin America	0.98	1.00	55	49	1.07	1.08	1.12	1.19
North America & Western Europe	1.00	1.01	50	44	0.99	1.00	1.23	1.33
South and West Asia	0.84	0.96	63	58	0.75	1.85	0.64	0.77
Sub Saharan Africa	0.89	0.93	54	54	0.82	0.79	0.67	0.66
World	0.93	0.97	58	54	0.92	0.95	0.96	1.08

Source: UNESCO (2010).

Progress in gender parity in secondary and tertiary education

As for secondary education, the goal of gender parity has been achieved in a number of regions including Central Asia, East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Western Europe. In other regions, the gender gap has been narrowing, particularly in South and West Asia, and to a lesser degree, in the Arab States. There is, however, a slightly regressive pattern observed in regions such as Central and Eastern Europe and the Pacific, as well as in sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, the gender gap in secondary enrolment is most evident in the three regions where average enrolment is the lowest – sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and South Asia.[29] As far as tertiary education is concerned, progress has been recorded in all regions of the world, with particularly spectacular progress in the Arab States, East Asia and the Pacific, as well as in South and West Asia. In certain regions, such as Central and Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, North America, the Pacific, and Western Europe, the share of women participating in higher education is far greater than that of men with GPI values ranging from 1.25 to 1.33 in 2007. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, where average GPI is as low as 0.66, the goal of gender parity in tertiary education remains an important challenge.

Preschool education

EFA Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

While patterns of enrolment in primary education are on the rise, "millions of children start school carrying the handicap that comes with the experience of malnutrition, ill health and poverty in their earlier years."[30] While EFA Goal 1 is much broader than preschool education, it has been

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[29] MDG Report (2010).
[30] GMR (2010: 42).

recognized as an effective means of overcoming the learning handicap of early childhood among the most vulnerable children. Investment in preschool education is a cost-effective way to enhance better learning in primary school, particularly for these children from more disadvantaged communities. While there has been a global increase in participation rates in pre-primary education with enrolment growing in all regions of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, the expansion has been uneven. Gross enrolment ratios in pre-primary enrolment vary from over 80% in North America and Western Europe, to approximately 65% in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific, to approximately 30-45% in Asia, to less than 20% in the Arab States, and sub-Saharan Africa. Much as is the case at other levels of education, there are also significant disparities within countries with the most the lowest enrolment ratios observed among the most disadvantaged children. Public investment should be geared towards narrowing disparities by targeting marginalized groups, who tend to reap particularly high benefits in relation to pre-school learning.

Moreover, levels of educational attainment of women, particularly as of secondary education, have a positive impact on the demand for education of their children[31]. A mother's level of education has a strong positive effect on the enrollment and levels of educational attainment of her children, particularly in the case of girls. For non-literate female adults and out-of-school youth who have missed out on opportunities to access schooling or who have dropped out before having completed a full cycle of primary education, non formal education programs can make a major contribution to encouraging enrolment of their children in preschool education and enhancing the learning outcomes of their children.

Patterns of inequality and marginalization in education

Marginalization in education is not always easy to measure since national data is often not disaggregated in a manner that allows for the identification of disadvantaged groups. Moreover, "many governments attach little weight to improving data availability relating to some of the most disadvantaged sections of society – child laborers, people living in informal settlements and individuals with disabilities – and to remote regions."[32] Having said this, a recent examination of deprivation and marginalization in education (UNESCO 2010) allows a measure of the scale of inequality and inequity in educational attainment between and across countries, and for a better understanding of the social composition of marginalized groups[33]. Based on the commonly accepted minimal proxy indicator for literacy, the DME dataset has established benchmarks for *education poverty* (less than four years of education), as well as for *extreme education poverty* (less than two years of education). The examination of data from the eighty countries included in the dataset indicates that "absolute deprivation in education remains at extraordinarily high levels", despite the progress observed over the past decade. Indeed, education poverty is observed in 22 countries, where 30 per cent or more of young adults (17-22) have fewer than four years of education.[34] This share rises to 50% in 11 sub-Saharan African countries. More worrying still is the extreme education poverty observed in twenty-six countries where 20% or more of young adults have fewer than two years of schooling. In other countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Somalia, the share is as high as 50% or more.

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[31] See, for example, Montgomery, Kouamé & Oliver (1995) on Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.
[32] GMR (2010: 8).
[33] The Deprivation and Marginalization in Education (DME) tool is based on dataset comprising 80 countries. See UNESCO (2010). *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Reaching the Marginalized. Paris.
[34] Countries include Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Liberia, Morocco, and Pakistan.

Inequality based on poverty, gender and language

These national averages mask more extreme inequalities based on poverty, language and gender which often combine to exacerbate the risk of educational marginalization. In the Philippines, for instance, education poverty among the poor is four times the national average. When the social marginalization of poor women is accounted for, it emerges that almost half of poor rural females in Egypt and close to 90 percent in Morocco have fewer than four years of education. Inequality based on income, gender and urban/rural residence are often further compounded by other factors of disparity linked to language to create "mutually reinforcing disadvantages" and "complex patterns of marginalization". Examples of this include Kurdish-speaking girls in Turkey or Hausa-speaking girls in Nigeria where 47% and 97%, respectively, of those from the poorest households have fewer than two years of education[35].

Multiple and interrelated factors of disadvantage

In addition to income, residence and minority language or ethnic status, gender disparities in education are also closely linked to the weak position of women and girls in many societies, and to the phenomenon of sexual harassment and gender-based violence which remains a taboo subject, and which consequently all too often goes underreported and remains largely unaddressed. The issue gender-based violence is further exacerbated in conflict-affected societies where the impact of violent conflict is the greatest on the poorest segments of society, particularly girls and women. The disruption of educational processes, overall insecurity and the possible targeting of schools during violent conflict explains the fact that an estimated 28 million (or approximately 40%) of the out-of-school children across the world are concentrated in conflict-affected countries[36]. As far as HIV and AIDS is concerned, in addition to threatening lives, keeping children out of school and compromising learning, the pandemic reinforces wider problems related to poverty and social discrimination, such as economic pressure, orphan-hood and stigmatization.[37] In all these cases, the failure to address deeply rooted inequalities, stigmatization and discrimination linked to the income, residence, minority status and disability is holding back progress towards Education for All. "Governments have to do far more to extend opportunities to hard-to-reach groups such as ethnic minorities, poor households in slums and remote rural areas, those affected by armed conflict and children with disabilities."[38]

This overview of progress towards reaching the goal of universal primary education clearly illustrates the rapid progress made, including in some of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and South Asia. Most countries have seen increased enrolment, narrowing of gender gaps and an extension of educational opportunities to traditionally excluded groups. Having said this, the persistence of high drop out rates observed in many contexts continues to reproduce patterns of illiteracy among youth thus jeopardising the achievement of broader development goals. The pace of progress needs to be maintained and strengthened, in particular for populations that are still being left behind and for the millions of children and adolescents not in school. Indeed, not only do significant inequalities between countries persist, but national averages in many countries mask striking inequalities in the deployment of teachers and in levels of educational attainment and outcomes. Traditional factors of marginalization in education such

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[35] GMR (2010).
[36] UNESCO (2011). *Education and Conflict: The Hidden Crisis*. EFA Global Monitoring Report.
[37] GMR (2010: 184).
[38] GMR (2010: 8).

as gender and urban/rural residence combine with income, language, minority status, HIV and AIDS, age (particularly in the case of young adolescent girls), and disability, to reproduce patterns of educational deprivation and poverty, and is particularly evident in low-income and conflict-affected countries. Understanding specific patterns of marginalization is crucial to the design of effective interventions aimed at overcoming barriers to the fulfillment of the right to education and to achievement of wider development goals.

III. Quality of education: Improving learning outcomes

EFA Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Until recently, much of the focus in educational development has been on increasing the number of children and youth that have access to basic education, with much less attention being paid to the outcomes of the educational process. Beyond the mere delivery of more schooling to greater numbers, the level of skills that children and youth acquire through education is the ultimate measure of the success or failure of individual and collective investment in education. In many countries, higher net primary enrollment rates have yet to fully translate into higher literacy rates mainly because the high dropout rates observed in many contexts. In addition to household poverty, such patterns of drop may also be related to the low perceived relevance of education provided, and to the increased reliance on under qualified, poorly paid and motivated contractual teachers with few or no opportunities for professional development. As a result, many children do not complete the full primary education cycle and, consequently, do not acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. Moreover, completion of a full cycle of primary education of poor quality does not always ensure the acquisition of literacy skills. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, an analysis of 21 countries showed that 22-24 year-olds with five years of education had a 40% chance of being illiterate.[39] As a result, patterns of primary school dropout and the often low quality of learning in primary schools, contribute to the reproduction of illiteracy among young adults.

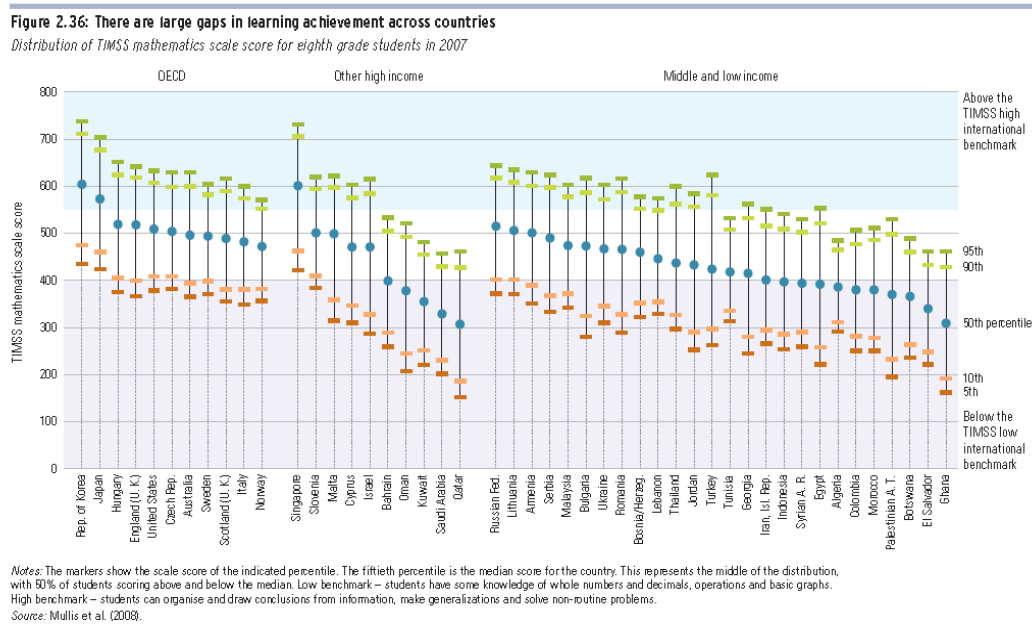**Gaps in learning achievement across and within countries**

Beyond disparities in access to, and participation in education, international and regional assessments of learning achievement at various stages of schooling and in different skill areas are providing useful data on the significant disparities in the distribution of learning achievement across and within countries[40]. The 2007 *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS), for instance, illustrates the extent of gaps between countries in levels of learning achievement. Average test scores in mathematics for eighth grade students in the Republic of Korea (the highest-performing country in this ranking), for example, are almost twice as high as those in Ghana (the lowest-performing country in this ranking). Likewise, the level of learning achievement of the average student in such countries as El Salvador, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia or Morocco is comparable to the poorest-performing 10% of students from higher-performing countries such as Australia, Malaysia, Malta, or Serbia (see Figure 6). In addition to disparities

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[39] UNESCO-BREDA (2007). *Dakar +7: EFA Top Priority for Integrated Sector-Wide Policies*. Dakar, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA).
[40] Examples of these assessments include the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMMS); Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS); Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC); Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ); Student Achievement in Latin America and the Caribbean (SERCE).

between countries, there are significant inequalities in learning achievement within countries, and they tend to be much wider in low-income countries. Such comparative analysis of international assessment data "highlights the degree of inequality in learning achievement worldwide, with students from low-income countries faring especially poorly."[41]

Figure 6: Distribution of TIMSS mathematics scores for Grade 8 students (2007)

Figure 2.36: There are large gaps in learning achievement across countries
Distribution of TIMSS mathematics scale score for eighth grade students in 2007

Notes: The markers show the scale score of the indicated percentile. The fiftieth percentile is the median score for the country. This represents the middle of the distribution, with 50% of students scoring above and below the median. Low benchmark – students have some knowledge of whole numbers and decimals, operations and basic graphs. High benchmark – students can organise and draw conclusions from information, make generalizations and solve non-routine problems.
Source: Mullis et al. (2008).

While it is generally true average levels of learning achievement rise with average income, the links are far from automatic. Not only do high income-countries such as the Republic of Korea, and Singapore outperform wealthier countries such as the United States of America, but in some high-income countries such as Qatar, results are similar to those observed for Ghana. Likewise, in such middle-income countries as Algeria, Egypt and Morocco, over half of the students register under the minimum performance threshold. A recent study of school improvement in twenty countries[42] has also confirmed that systems with similar levels of spending on education have widely ranging levels of performance and that increase in expenditure does not always translate in higher of more equitable levels of student outcomes. Improvement in the quality of education can be achieved by some systems without necessarily increasing levels of funding.

Enhancing the relevance of learning

Enhancing the relevance of learning content is fundamental to improving the effectiveness of education as a catalyst for human development. Much of the thinking around improving the quality of education, particularly at the secondary level, hinges on making the teaching and learning process more relevant to the world of world. This can be done by including work experience as part of the curriculum and examination requirements, and by promoting collaboration between schools and vocational and technical training institutions which provide real "on site" training in vocational skills. Examples from Save the Children´s project in Colombia, for

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[41] GMR (2010: 106).
[42] Mourshed, Chijoke & Barber (2010). *How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better.* McKinsey & Co.

instance, include agricultural training on school farms and the building of tourist packages with students training as guides. While better linkages between academic and professional learning are essential for employment, income generation and poverty reduction, enhancing relevance of learning cannot be reduced to its sole economic dimension. Beyond important concerns regarding employability, sustainable development in today's globalized world also requires specific knowledge, skills and values to address a wide range of contemporary challenges relative to the environment (sustainable management of natural resources, climate change, risk of natural disasters…), as well as to social, civic and political socialization in an increasing interdependent and changing world (respect for life, human dignity, cultural diversity and human rights principles). Such components of global citizenship are as essential as employability for enhancing the relevance of education and its catalytic role in reaching the MDGs.

The teaching and learning process

More attention needs to be paid to the teaching-learning process through the adoption of student-centered approaches, the design of more relevant curricula content which provide life skills and facilitate a transition into the labor market, providing relevant and affordable books and materials, providing education in local language for the first years of schooling and addressing issues such as predisposition, temperament, peer pressure and socialization. Implementing learner-centered approaches remains a challenge in many contexts and overcrowded classes, the lack of proper initial teacher training, as well as the lack of professional development opportunities, all seriously erode the capacity of teachers to implement such approaches. Having said this, based on comprehensive, multifaceted and locally-adapted models, UNICEF's Child-Friendly School policy has demonstrated that schools can achieve child-centered safe and healthy learning environments. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), through Open Educational Resources and distance-learning opportunities, among others, offer a number of promising developments for enhancing quality and increasing access to education, although more needs to be known about which mechanisms work most successfully in which contexts. Moreover, quality teaching and learning need not necessarily be expensive, particularly when it is tailored to the context and made to fit the purpose. Beyond using affordable and locally available materials to create teaching and learning materials, the use of local experts from within local communities, such as in the Waldorf Pedagogy movement in Brazil for instance, can be effectively used to teach and share their rich knowledge and experience.

The teacher gap

Teachers are the single most important resource in sustaining progress towards better quality of learning in any countries. One of the main challenges to reaching EFA goals, particularly among marginalized groups, is the acute shortage of qualified teachers. In maintaining efforts to accelerate progress towards universal primary education, countries will have to make significant efforts to recruit and train teachers. But many countries are facing severe teacher shortages as a result of progress in enrolment in primary education. Furthermore, countries that have achieved universal primary education still face ongoing challenges in recruiting, training and retaining sufficient numbers of qualified primary teachers. Indeed, in 2008, close to 100 countries, in both the North and South, were experiencing some degree of teacher shortage if they were to provide quality education to all primary school-aged children by the target year of 2015. Figure 8 indicates the countries facing a teacher shortage and the magnitude of the gap. It was estimated in 2008 that at least 1.9 million additional new teachers would be needed by 2015 to reach MDG 2, over half of which (55 %) in sub-Saharan Africa alone where - together with some of the Arab States

(Djibouti, Oman, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Qatar, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic) and countries in South and West Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan) - the most severe teacher shortages are observed[43]. When taking into account the attrition of another estimated 7.2 million teachers between 2008 and 2015[44], it was then estimated that a total of 9.1 million teachers would need to be recruited worldwide to ensure achievement of MDG 2 in 2015[45]. It is estimated that the "number of new teachers needed in sub-Saharan Africa alone equals the current teaching force in the region."[46]

Figure 8: Countries facing a teacher gap
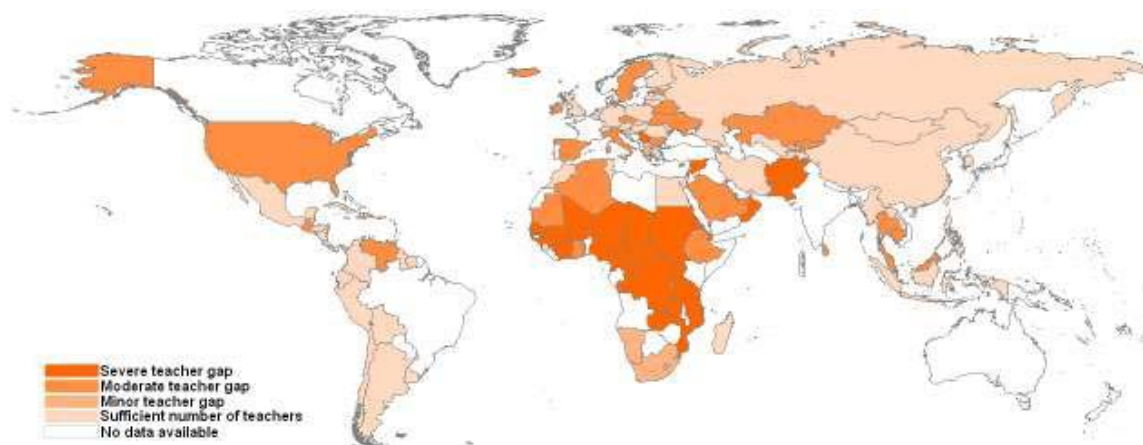
Note: Data are for 142 countries that reported teacher data for 2008. For other countries with missing data, figures were computed by the UIS in order to estimate the global teacher gap. Severe teacher gaps are found in countries which need to grow by 3.0-20.0% for the 2008-2015 period; moderate teacher gaps require an annual growth rate of 0.25-2.9%; minor teacher gaps require an annual growth rate of 0-0.24%.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2010), Statistical Annex, Table 4.

Inequitable patterns of teacher deployment

But the shortage of qualified teachers is also related to patterns of deployment. High pupil/teacher ratios tend to be concentrated in rural areas, as well as in those areas marked by poverty and disadvantage. Examples of these inequitable patterns of teacher deployment abound. In Uganda, for example, pupil/teacher ratios of more than 90:1 in the northern regions are almost twice as high as the national average. In Malawi, while the urban pupil/teacher ratio is 46:1, it is 81:1 in rural areas.[47] Moreover, these inequitable patterns of teacher deployment are exacerbated when considering the share of qualified teachers. Beyond recruitment and deployment, low teacher morale further exacerbates the problem when low pay not only hinders the recruitment of the promising candidates, but also forces many teachers to supplement their salaries through other activities. While teacher absenteeism may be due to low remuneration, it also related to the lack of other incentives and professional development opportunities generally but especially in rural areas. The financial challenge of expanding the teaching force and ensuring their training and professional development has led some countries to resort to contract teachers at lower levels of

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[43] Severe shortages are recorded in the following Sub-Saharan African countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Democratic republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia.
[44] Teacher attrition is due to retirement, change of profession, switch in level of teaching, or taking on non-teaching educational responsibilities.
[45] UIS (2010).
[46] MDG Report (2010: 17).
[47] Mulkeen (2009).

remuneration and benefits, possibly compromising the quality of teaching and learning processes.[48]

Beyond issues of access and retention, strengthening education as a catalyst for human development requires a focus on the quality and relevance of educational outcomes. Levels of learning achievement vary widely across and within countries and, while lower-income countries generally fare less well, higher levels of spending in education do not always appear to lead to improvement of learning outcomes and educational performance. Focusing Teachers remain the most important resource in ensuring the quality of learning, and the acute shortage of qualified teachers observed in so many countries around the world poses a real challenge to the necessary acceleration of progress towards reaching internationally agreed education targets and overall development goals.

IV. Overcoming barriers to universal basic education for all

This section reviews some of the measures which have proven to be effective in reducing inequalities and inequities in educational access, participation and outcomes. When education goals are aligned with the right to education standards and principles, measures which make education more affordable and accessible, social protection programs more comprehensive, and learning environments more inclusive, all contribute to progress in access to, equity in, and quality of education. These measures include: lowering financial barriers through the total or partial elimination of school fees; providing incentives through social protection programs such as conditional cash transfers; school feeding and school health programs that help to reduce absenteeism; bringing schools closer to marginalized communities; developing second chance programs; and improving the learning environment in disadvantaged schools. While some of these measures require strengthen public investment in the education sector, many of these measures are financially feasible, even in the poorest countries.

Making education more affordable for poorer households

In fulfilling their legal obligation to provide free primary education for all, a number of States have eliminated the direct costs of primary schooling through the partial or total abolition of school fees. The school fee abolition initiative, initially launched by UNICEF and the World Bank, was designed to support policies to ensure access to quality basic education by removing or reducing cost barriers to parents and households. The initiative has accelerated progress towards universal primary completion by eliminating school fees or by providing targeted fee exemptions, subsidies and incentives for the poor, resulting in dramatic surges in enrolment in countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Timor Leste and Uganda.[49] A tremendous increase in enrollment has been observed in particular among poor, previously excluded, and vulnerable children (girls, children living in remote rural populations, child laborers, children with disabilities, and children affected by HIV/AIDS and social conflict) whose households are the most sensitive to the "regressive taxation" that school fees represent. School fee abolition has a direct impact on equity and

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[48] There is evidence for this in the West Africa region (UNESCO 2008).
[49] The abolition of primary school fees in Burundi, for example, resulted in a threefold increase in primary-school enrolment since 1999, achieving universal primary enrolment by 2008 (MDG Report, 2010: 17). Primary enrolment grew by more than 2 million in two years in Uganda (World Bank & UNICEF 2009) and by more than 1 million in three years in Kenya.

inclusion as it addresses the rights and specific needs of marginalized, excluded and vulnerable children.[50]

And yet, even the total abolition of school fees is only a partial response to wider poverty constraints affecting household demand for education and it is important to consider complementary measures to overcome indirect opportunity costs of schooling. In order to offset the costs of schooling for the poorest households and make schooling affordable for the poorest children, complementary measures may also involve cutting the costs of uniforms, textbooks and other materials, as well as offering conditional cash transfers and stipends at secondary level. Nepal, for example, scaled up its stipend programme targeting low-caste Dalit children, Viet Nam introduced a variety of financial support mechanisms to help ethnic minority students, and Mozambique has targeted orphans and other vulnerable children with vouchers to buy clothing and stationary. Turkey, also, introduced conditional cash transfers in 2002, targeting regular school attendance at primary and secondary schools among children from poor households, while Armenia, through its Food-for-Education programme, increased incentives for participation and more regular attendance through the provision of school meals.

Making schools more accessible for children and adolescents

Physical access to schools and classrooms remains an important barrier to Education for All, particularly for girls in rural areas, isolated communities in more remote areas and for migrant populations. There are many successful examples of measures to reduce distance to school, or to adapt schooling to the specific living conditions of local communities. In Ethiopia, for example, the vast majority (over 85%) of the 6000 schools built since 1997 are in rural areas, significantly reducing average distance to schools, and resulting in a significant increase in enrolment, particularly among girls.[51]

Box 1: Reaching the marginalized in Bangladesh through floating schools

Bangladesh has made rapid but uneven progress towards universal primary education. Previously deep gender inequalities have been eliminated in primary education and rural areas have been catching up with urban areas. Enrolment among children living in extreme poverty has been less impressive, however, and the marginalization of this group remains a barrier to universal primary education. Initiatives developed by non-government organizations, which reach over 1 million of the country's most marginalized children, provide powerful evidence that this barrier can be removed.

One example comes from the country's riverbanks. The 800,000 strong Bede, or River Gypsy, community lives on boats in groups of ten to fifteen families. The Bede, among the poorest people in the country, live off trinket selling, fishing, pearl-diving, snake-catching and traditional healing. These activities involve travel over long distances. Because they are not settled, the Bede have traditionally lacked the residency rights necessary to claim school places. Even when they do have formal rights, their mobility makes it difficult for their children to attend school regularly, so teachers are reluctant to enrol them or provide books.

Since 2006, a national non-government organization, the Gram Bangla Unnayan Committee, has provided education through twenty-one 'school boats' that follow the Bede community. Teachers are recruited from the community and given basic training. The boats provide education for two to three years, after which children living with sedentary relatives can gain admission to government primary schools.

Sources: Excerpted from UNESCO (2010) based on the following sources: Bangladesh Government (2008); Khan and Chakraborty (2008); Maksud and Rasul (2006); Nath (2009); UNICEF (2008*a*); World Bank (2008*d*).

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[50] The World Bank & UNICEF (2009).
[51] GMR (2010: 190).

In Bangladesh, non-governmental organisations have launched initiatives to make education more accessible for children who are still missing out on educational opportunities because of extreme poverty and/or the mobility that characterises the lifestyles of their communities. The school boats that follow the Bede (or "River Gypsy") community in Bangladesh, providing children with two-three years of primary education is one such example (see Box 1). Elsewhere, the Student Family Lodging Programme launched by the People's Foundation of Bolivia, for instance, has made education more accessible for young people from extremely poor families living in isolated small communities in the Andean highlands. Funded by the municipal districts, educational centres in strategically located villages together with an accommodation network of host families, allows youth from neighbouring communities to attend school on a regular basis and take part in preventive health seminars during the week, and return to their families and communities at the end of the week.[52] Beyond distance to school, accessibility is also conditioned by the availability of low cost ramps, appropriate toilet facilities and transport for children with disabilities; barriers that can be overcome with policy interventions and regulations relative to school design.

Providing second chance programmes for out-of-school children and youth

Accelerated Learning Programs are other options to address the education needs of and children youth who have either never enrolled in school, dropped out before completing a full primary cycle, or whose schooling has been disrupted following displacement resulting from conflict or a natural disaster. In the disadvantaged regions of northern Ghana, for example, NGO-run second chance accelerated literacy programmes for out-of-school children have provided them with effective basic skills levels, and in many instances, the opportunity of re-entering formal schooling (see Box 2).

Box 2: Addressing educational deprivation in northern Ghana through complementary education provision

Northern Ghana faces some of the country's most acute educational deprivation. School attendance rates in the region are among the lowest in the country and many children reach adulthood with no more than a few years of education. Parents cite distance to school, cost, seasonal labour demand and, for girls, early marriage as major barriers.

An innovative programme run by non-government organizations is attempting to provide out-of-school children in northern Ghana with a second chance. School for Life offers an intensive nine-month literacy course for children aged 8 to 14, with the aim of preparing them to re-enter primary school. Teaching schedules are designed to accommodate seasonal demands on children's time. Students are given free books and uniforms are not required, reducing the cost of attendance.

The School for Life curriculum is designed to make education meaningful to rural families who feel that formal schools fail to respect the dignity and strengthen the self-esteem of their children. Students are taught in local languages by locally recruited facilitators, many of them volunteers, who receive in-service training.

School for Life has achieved impressive results. Between 1996 and 2007, it reached around 85,000 children in eight districts, with no discernible gender gap. An evaluation in 2007 found that over 90% of students completed the course, 81% met third-grade literacy and numeracy standards and 65% entered the formal education system. Government data indicate that School for Life graduates entering formal school perform above the average in Mathematics and English.

Sources: Excerpted from UNESCO (2010) based on the following sources: Casely-Hayford et al. (2007); Hartwell (2006); Mfum-Mensah (2009).

In conflict-affected countries, where there is a high concentration of out out-of-school children and youth, accelerated learning enables older students to complete their basic education cycle in a timely manner providing basic literacy and lifeskills. Examples of such programs include those being provided by the Ministry of Education of Sudan to assist students to catch up with schooling

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[52] Acker & Gasperini (2009). *Education for Rural People.* Rome: FAO.

in Darfur, or the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary School Programme for adolescents affected by the conflict in Sierra Leone being provided by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF (see Box 3).

Box 3: Complementary Rapid Education for Primary School Programme in Sierra Leone

Due to the 11 years of civil war, a high number of the adolescences of in Sierra Leone lag behind, as they were either affected or involved in the war and therefore did not have access to any basic education opportunities. It is estimated that, more than 400,000 children aged 10-15 years have missed part of their schooling or have never been to school. The current youth unemployment rate stands at 70%.

One impressive program that works to reverse the lag is the Ibis Complementary Rapid Education for Primary School Programme (CREPS) that was developed by UNICEF and the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Education. The programme offers six years of primary school education in three years to children and adolescents who missed education due to the war. More than 3,000 young people who missed school during the war have benefited from this programme which also works rigorously to enhance the professional development of teachers and stakeholders in education at both central and district levels to enhance governance and accountability in education delivery in Sierra Leone. The programme trains teachers while at the same time putting them to work in classrooms—thereby creating a new generation of teachers.

Source: CAF

Overcoming resource constraints on the training and working conditions of teachers

Although the shortage of financial resources is, to varying degrees, a key constraint to improving the training and working conditions of teachers in both developed and developing countries, it is not insurmountable. Effective strategies do exist to mitigate the potential adverse impact of limited resources on the training of teachers and their working conditions. Foremost among these, perhaps, is better management of available resources to produce intended outcomes. Indeed, poor management of resources may arguably be a more critical constraint than the absolute volume of the resources available. Much can be achieved within the same envelope or without additional resource if only those resources are well managed. A focus on non-financial incentives such as providing adequate teacher professional support, promoting their innovative attitude and skills, motivating them to be innovative in all situations, easing bureaucratic burdens on them and improving accountability measures can improve teacher training as well as their working conditions even in resource poor contexts.

Moreover, when decentralized, teacher professional support can be made more affordable, sustainable and contextually responsive, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Effective experiences include building the capacity of decentralized education authorities to deliver professional support to teachers, building "teacher support networks" to be lead and coordinated by competent teacher and to serve as spaces for research and sharing experiences, building and sharing materials, training and in classroom support. Awarding diplomas to teachers that participate in such decentralized professional support services can also be an important incentive. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can also be used to scale up teacher training programs through distance education which can be delivered much like the way in which farmers get information about markets and products from IT Kiosks.

Effective measures for reducing inequalities in educational access, participation and outcomes exist. Various combinations of measures aiming at making education more affordable for the poorest communities, more accessible to the most disadvantaged learners, better adapted to local contexts and conditions, and more equitable is terms of quality of learning. While some of these measures require greater public funding, many of these measures do not.

V. Mobilizing Resources for Education

The impact of the economic and financial crisis

The global economic and financial crisis represents an important risk for education and development as it impacts both on household demand for schooling as well as on domestic and international resources available for education. Country studies[53] indicate that vulnerable households face difficulties in meeting school costs, and that children are being moved to cheaper schools or public institutions that provide food or material. There are also a growing number of reports of a rise in absenteeism, school dropouts and increased child labour. In many cases, household demand for education is decreasing as a result of declines in income and subsequent increases in families' contributions to absorbing rising direct and indirect costs of schooling.

The onset of financial and economic crisis has put additional pressure on developing countries to cut their budgets as most of the world's poorest countries lack the resources to counteract the impact of the financial and crisis with counter cyclical measures. Indeed, even before the crisis many developing countries had traditionally underinvested in education as monitored through the share of education in public expenditure. Given the need to accelerate progress towards the internally agreed education goals, and protect the gains made from the adverse impact of the multiple crises on education, the mobilization of resources for education is of paramount importance. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, for instance, it is estimated that some 18 billion USD a year would be required to reach education development goals by 2015.

There is therefore a need to increase fiscal capacity of the State and resource availability in education. While many countries have thus far managed to protect levels of domestic resources invested in education, new pressures are forcing countries to increase fiscal space. Increasing resource availability in education can be achieved through a number of ways including through cost-recovery measures adopted in public institutions of education, particularly at the tertiary level, as well as through private sector contributions[54], more efficient management of existing resources, as well as, in the case of the poorest countries, through increased aid.

Declining aid to education

However, aid flows to education, already insufficient before the crisis, are declining. Indeed, while the share of education in total official development assistance had remained stable as some during the 1999-2007 period, total aid to education decreased between 2007 and 2008 both in terms of the envelope available (from USD 11.7 to USD 11.4 billion), as well as in terms of the share of aid to education within overall Official Development Assistance (ODA). Even among emerging donors, where levels of aid are rising fast, the share of education remains limited. Furthermore, aid to basic education recently fell by 22 per cent to USD 4.7 billion, with only USD 2 billion going to the poorer countries putting past development gains into jeopardy. Africa faces the greatest shortfall, estimated at USD 18 billion. Countries affected by conflict are not receiving

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[53] UNESCO (2009).
[54] IWGE (2010: 10).

sufficient support, with aid to conflict-affected societies highly concentrated to such countries as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Pakistan, leaving many others with insufficient aid.

Alternative and innovative sources of funding

Having said this, external aid is not the only means of overcoming the constraints of the limited fiscal capacity to mobilize resources for education in developing countries within the context of the economic recession. There are alternative public investment policies that could increase fiscal capacity within national resources, such as increasing the efficiency of public expenditure in education, reducing corruption, or decreasing the share of public spending allocated to military/security concerns. Beyond measures to increase domestic fiscal space, and traditional sources of international aid, recent discussions have also turned toward innovative mechanisms for the financing of education, such as the possibility of taxing the informal economy, which represents a significant share of economies in lower income countries, and which could catalyze current spending on education and push efficiency gains. Particularly innovative financing options – such as education tax on financial transactions, professional sports levies, education ventures funds, bond from the diasporas, voluntary contributions of migrant or better channeling of remittances – could help raise the profile of education and promote innovation in education whilst simultaneously mobilizing new resources and filling financing gaps. While there are many new ideas, there is still a lack of innovative financing mechanisms.

The EFA Fast Track initiative

Since its launch in 2002, the overall record of the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) in increasing resource availability and funding effectiveness has been mixed, if not one of "sustained underachievement"[55] due to problems related to governance, finance and country coverage. Major shortcomings of the EFA-FTI are poor disbursement record and low political support, no funding from private or philanthropic sources and weak coverage of conflict-affected countries. Indeed, the FTI is in need of reform and extending coverage to conflict-affected countries, might very well be an urgent reform priority. Having said this, FTI has had a positive impact on more coordinated sector-wide national education policy and planning processes, as well as on the establishment of a catalytic fund.

The challenge of the Paris Declaration

The global commitment to align aid for development with national priorities, as articulated in the Paris Declaration, and to "make the money work", continues to challenge current approaches to allocating development aid, including for education. The potential of mutual assessment reviews in the education sector – with concrete performance targets in national education plans and aid policies – should be taken up as a critical means to reinstate trust between providers and government. It can help to harmonize donors, promote country leadership, results-based evaluation, inclusion of all relevant stakeholders and reporting of aid and other development financing on budget.

The financial crisis is threatening to reverse gains made in education to since 2000 and undermining the need to redouble efforts and accelerate progress. In the long run, predictable,

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[55] GMR 2010.

sustained and increasing domestic resource flows will remain the backbone of education. The financial crisis has also resulted in decreased levels of international support. While the EFA-FTI has made some important achievements, the general agreement is that it is in need of reform. A number of development partners have made greater strides in enhancing their aid effectiveness and in strengthening national accountability mechanisms but much remains to be done. The global partnership for education has expanded with emerging donors and South-South Cooperation playing an increasingly important role, as well as an increased role for non-state education providers.

VI. The way forward and recommendations

An integrated and holistic approach to the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals remain a powerful means of keeping the world's attention on development issues. In addition to being an important goal in its own right, education is widely recognized as a catalyst for the achievement of all other MDGs, and thus central to reducing poverty. Increasing educational attainment levels are shown to be intrinsically linked to long-term poverty reduction efforts, the improvement of health and the promotion of greater gender equity. Moreover, the important role which education can play in promoting a transition towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production is now also widely accepted. The education goals cannot be achieved without progress on the other MDGs. *The MDGs must therefore be pursued in an integrated and holistic manner*. Given the clear linkages between education goals and the other MDGs, as well as the catalytic role which education can play, *education needs to be factored in the design and implementation of national development strategies and the acceleration of national development efforts*.

Policy Coherence: Aligning actions across sectors

Having said this, progress in improving education depends not only on policies and action taken by the education sector or the ministry of education, but also on those undertaken by a wide range of other sectors. Achieving international education development goals therefore requires a coherent and comprehensive set of policies from a wide range of sectors. In the case of the promotion of gender equality, for example, as gender gaps in education are a reflection of societal norms and the gendered distribution of access to cultural and economic resources, gender-responsive education policies and strategies need to be coordinated with other measures affecting the wider legal, institutional, economic and socio-cultural environment within which development processes are embedded. In the area of science and technology, also, there is a need to strengthen policy linkages to enhance the role of ICTs and of science and technology, not only in overall development processes, but also in the education sector. Likewise, vocational training and skills development opportunities for youth need to be based on an assessment of local market conditions and require close collaboration between schools, local trades, industries and employers. As a result of these linkages, there is then a strong need to *align actions across sectors in view of ensuring overall coherence of sector policies* to maximize synergies and impact of integrated education for development interventions.

Going beyond UPE: Adopting a broader vision of education for development

As a catalyst for the achievement of international development goals relative to poverty reduction, the improvement of health, and the promotion of gender equality, education must be seen outside the narrow confines of MDG2 relative to universal primary education, and should *embrace the wider EFA agenda*. Indeed, aspects of the broader EFA agenda related to the quality and relevance of education (EFA Goal 6), youth and adult literacy (EFA Goal 6), pre-primary education (EFA Goal 1), and post-primary education and skills development (EFA Goal 3), all have a positive impact on the MDGs. As the expansion and improvement of basic education is pursued, the international community must also look more closely at the issue of access to secondary education and entry into the world of "decent" work. Evidence shows that availability of quality secondary education is a key determinant for completion of a primary school cycle, because secondary education is associated with greater economic benefits than primary education. It is important to promote vocational training initiatives and informal and low-threshold types of training, notably for marginalized groups of youth. While primary and other components of basic education remain a priority, *the direct contribution of secondary education and skills development, particularly for young women, to the achievement of the other MDGs needs to be recognized and planned for*.

Expanding partnerships for education and enhancing their impact

Reaching the internationally agreed education goals calls for the engagement of all sectors of society and a broad range of stakeholders, ranging from parents, teachers and local school boards to district and national authorities, policymakers, investors, non-governmental and civil-society organizations, international institutions and donor governments. Non-governmental (including faith-based) organizations, private and civil society groups are making a major contribution to the achievement of the education goals. It will be important to *further harness those energies both at the country and global levels* to leverage education funding.

Increased funding for education and ensuring more efficient and equitable distribution

In order to maintain progress towards enlarged and more equitable access to better quality basic education, countries with below-average educational performance should increase overall domestic and external investment in education, while using and redistributing available resources more effectively and more equitably. The global financial crisis should not be used to justify decreased government spending to the education sector. No less than 6 per cent of a country's national income should be devoted to education and 15-20 per cent of government budget should be dedicated to primary education, both of which have been widely accepted by the international community. The allocation of public resources for education should serve to reduce inequities rather than to exacerbate them, particularly through affirmative action geared towards communities and geographical areas disadvantaged in terms of access to and quality of education.

Need for greater accountability and transparency

There is a need for greater accountability and transparency in the delivery of education services. Evidence from developing countries shows that strong political will is a key determinant for success in improving educational attainment, quality and equity, and arguably more important, at least in some contexts, than the amount of financial resources devoted to education. *Improve*

accountability and governance by putting in place the right incentives can help improve the functioning of key institutions, as they can help enhance the involvement of teachers and local officials in decision-making processes, improve resource allocation, block resource leakages ensuring that resources reach schools, and improve human resources management.

Strengthen national capacities to monitor equity

A focus on equity needs to be at the centre of strategies to meet all MDGs. While there has been major progress observed in reaching internationally-agreed upon education goals since 2000, efforts need to be strengthened, particularly within the current context of the global crisis and the direct and indirect impact it may have on the most vulnerable segments of society. Indeed, analysis of disaggregated data clearly reveals the often large inequalities and inequities that persist both in terms of access to education and quality of education received. In order to ensure achievement of both internationally-agreed education and broader development goals, planning for the provision of basic services such as primary education needs to focus more forcefully than in the past on those specific characteristics of particularly marginalized groups which make provision more difficult and limit the ability of the groups to take advantage of what is available.

Many countries have strengthened their information-management systems, increased the capacity and availability of education indicators, improved their data collection, analysis and application, and reinforced their monitoring and evaluation systems. They must continue to build on such momentum by addressing the weaknesses which still exist. Despite the progress achieved, not enough disaggregated data are available so that learning outcomes cannot be sufficiently monitored. *There is thus a critical need to strengthen further national capacities in the fields of data collection, monitoring and evaluation.*

Focus on equity through inclusive policies and targeted interventions

Access expansion must be equity-based, complemented by targeted interventions to reach marginalized groups. As part of a pro-equity approach, it may be necessary to go beyond the provision of free primary education and expand the coverage of social protection measures and cash transfers which use school enrolment and attendance as the conditions for cash payments to households. Governments should implement *inclusive policies and create programmes to better reach target groups based on the information on marginalized population.* Inclusive policies include *removing school fees, lowering indirect costs associated with uniforms and textbooks, providing educational opportunities that are closer to marginalized communities, providing accelerated learning programmes for out-of-school children and youth in difficult circumstances, expanding access to early childhood services and encouraging early intervention for disadvantaged children.*

Improving the working conditions and training of teachers

Teachers constitute the most important educational resource in all countries and in all communities. It is thus essential that their conditions of work and training be improved. Experience on the ground from across the world indicates that there in each context, measures that may be taken to improve the conditions of work and training of teachers. Such measures include; engaging teacher unions and Parents and Teacher Associations constructively to improve teacher working conditions and implement the teacher code of conduct; improving revenue collection through taxes and allocate some of those resources toward improving teacher training and working conditions; setting common standards for Teacher Training Colleges and

appointing independent bodies involving public, private and civil society actors to ensure quality assurance of teacher training institutions; appointing committed and strategic leaders to head education systems and teacher training colleges; recruiting teachers from local communities to improve motivation and reduce absenteeism; and reducing the burden of non-teaching administrative tasks such as census enumeration, election duty and other tasks would free teachers for more contact time with learners. To ensure a comprehensive teacher policy, *efforts should be invested in training, retraining and retaining teachers, and improving teachers' working conditions.* Teachers who have regular contact with excluded families and with parents of pupils in difficulty should be given special training, support and incentives. *They should also be included in the development of educational policies.*

Improving the quality and relevance of educational content

Improving the quality and relevance of learners' educational experience raises the perceived value of education among learners, their families and their communities. Quality standards in primary education should be raised by policies and measures to address different elements of educational quality and relevance. This would include teachers, curriculum, learning and teaching materials, language of instruction, school management and leadership, and assessment of learning outcomes.