



EFA | TOP PRIORITY FOR INTEGRATED SECTOR-WIDE POLICIES

Education  
for All  
IN AFRICA  
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## Data sources:

- Schooling data

The bulk of the data (series up to 2004/05) was provided by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). This concerns the final dataset made available in the first three months of 2007. The United Nations tables are used as reference for the indicators that require population data; these are sometimes different from those used at national level. This explains any differences between the figures in national publications and those in this report.

- Financial data

In addition to data provided by the UIS, data collected by the Pôle de Dakar education sector analysis and/or the World Bank technical teams during work on financial simulation sector models and/or medium term expenditure frameworks (MTEF) has also been used.

- Survey data

A wide range of sources has been used, specific examples of which are the MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys) household surveys and the DHS (Demographic and Health Surveys) surveys for social indicators, the PARSTAT project 1-2-3 surveys for labour market indicators, and data and analysis from the CONFEMEN PASEC and SACMEQ programmes for surveys on school learning achievements and their determining factors.

In the interests of clarity, the specific source and precise year of data are not always mentioned in the body of the text or in the country sheets; we invite the reader to refer to the "tables" in the appendices for information on specific data.

Care has been taken by the authors to monitor and consolidate data, especially when there were several sources for the same data item.

- Data from CSR (Country status report) type sector analysis

Alongside comparative international data on education produced by the UIS, analysis makes use of complementary statistical information on the countries' education systems from CSR type sector diagnosis assessments already carried out or ongoing, particularly for the following countries:

- West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo
- Central Africa: Cameroon, Congo, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad
- East Africa: Burundi, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Rwanda
- Southern Africa: Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland


**Data sources, quality, definitions and conventions as to the calculation of indicators and averages, are specified in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.**

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EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

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The Pôle de Dakar for education sector analysis team comprised:

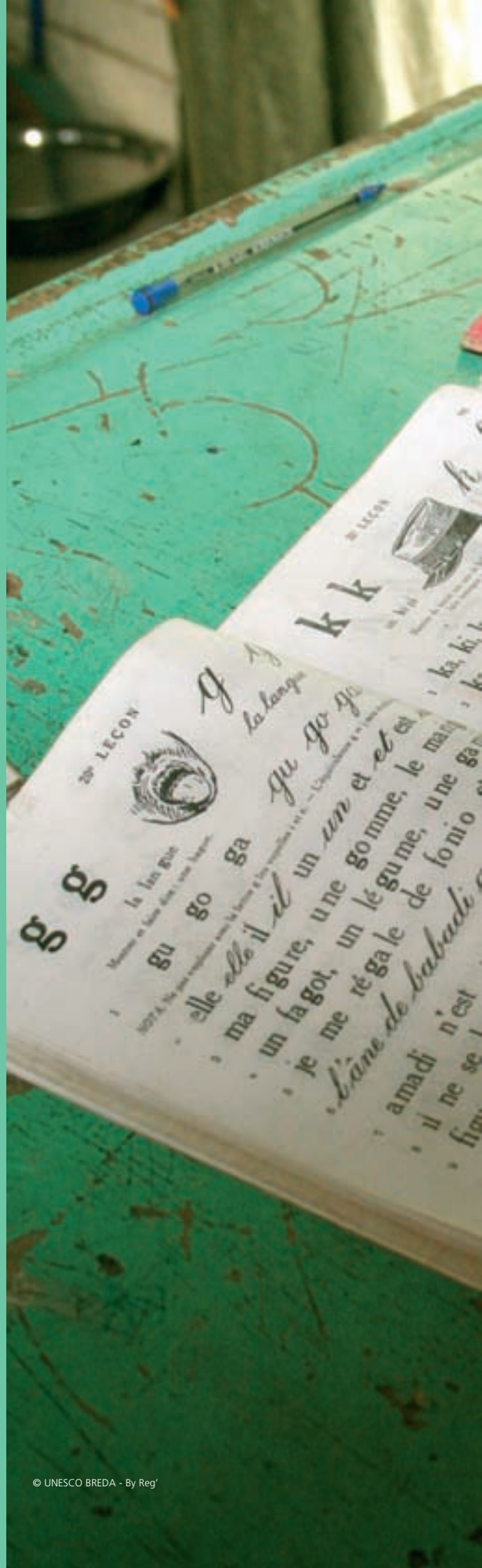
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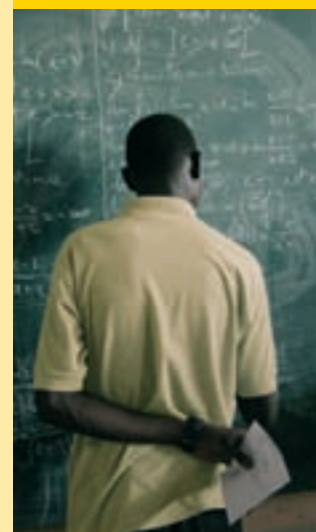
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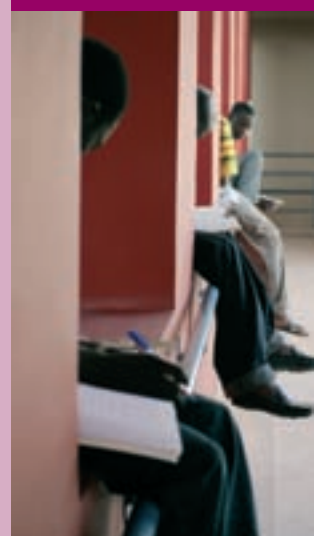
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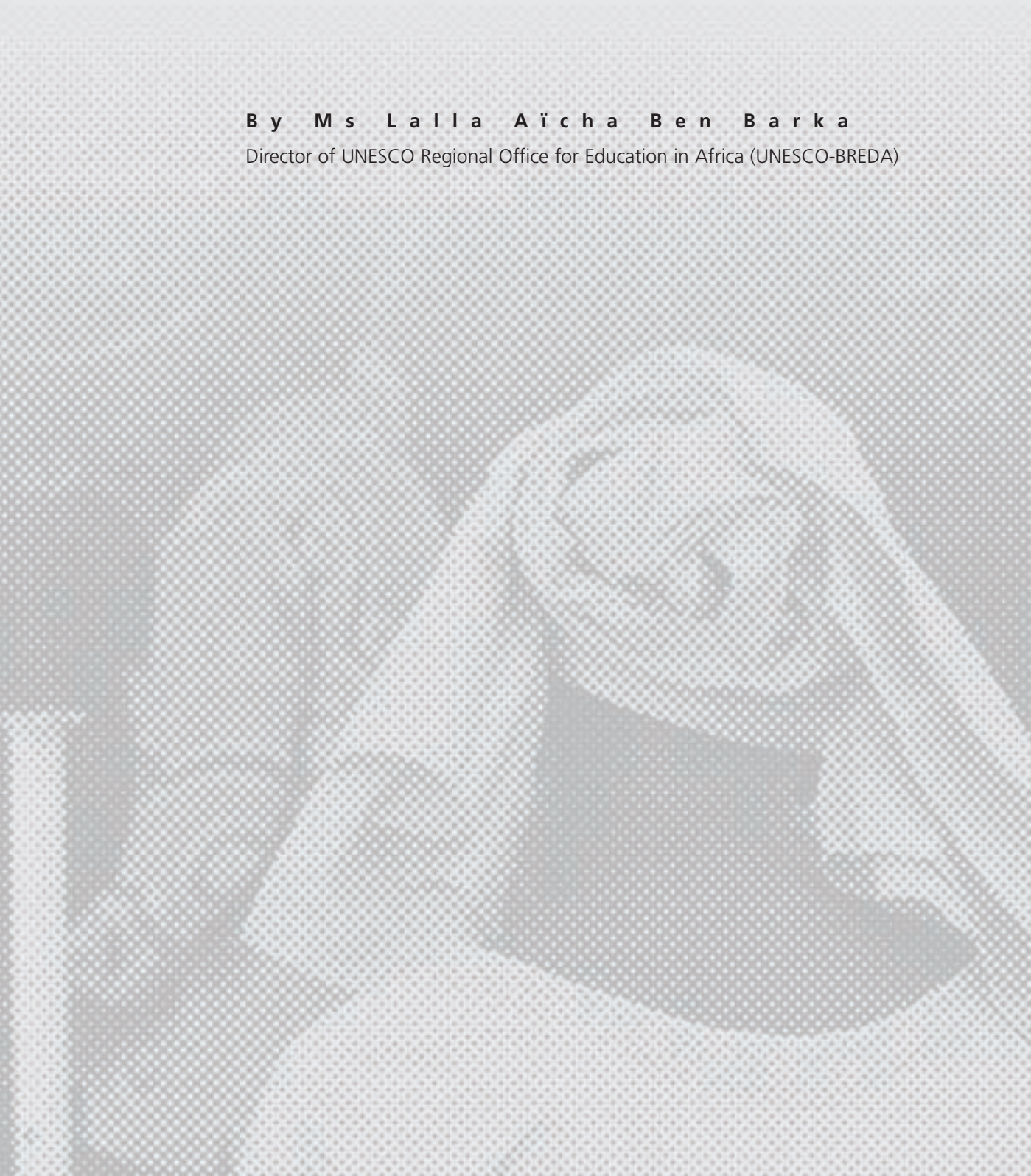
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# DKR+7 editorial

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**T**he second BRED report on EFA in Africa completes the previous one published in 2005. It incorporates the most recent available data, for 2004/05 or 2005/06 and as such, benefits from the necessary hindsight for drawing up a precise statement of the consequences of the Dakar Forum. This is not limited to enrolment trends, and concerns the many institutional changes made since that time. These changes establish new practices for governments, technical and financial partners, and sub-regional and regional institutions. The report is also concerned with monitoring the financial commitments made by the international community. In line with the previous report, it was appropriate to measure precisely the progress made towards Universal Primary Education (UPE). We found it important to go further and attempt to appreciate the consequences of this progress: firstly, in terms of quality of learning, since many observers are afraid that this has been sacrificed on the road towards UPE in favour of completion rates; secondly, by looking into the marginalisation of non-formal education in the current promotion of primary education; finally, in terms of enrolment dynamics at post-primary levels.

The outcome is positive overall. The Dakar Forum changed the deal and made a break with the long habit of exchanging only good words and good intentions. There has been true mobilization, both at the level of the governments and with the

international community; this is reflected in concrete terms by the primary education indicators (access, completion), which have risen as much between 2000 and 2005 as between 1990 and 2000. We have taken this as a basis for revising the projections made in the earlier report, as to attainment of UPE by 2015 : 15 countries will be in a position to reach the goal. The countries that will undoubtedly not reach the goal, and which for the most part were already lagging far behind in 2000, have nevertheless come much nearer. For these countries, the road to UPE will remain open beyond 2015; its consolidation must be a priority for all African countries. This concerns maintaining the completion level, which has dropped over the recent period in some countries where the goal of UPE had been practically reached in 2000, and above all improving the quality of learning.

Consolidating the quantitative and qualitative goals of UPE does not only concern the governments. Although the Dakar Forum gave rise to strong international mobilization, there are now signs of loss of impetus in terms of financing, while the initial promises have only been partially kept, both in volume of aid and in its appropriation. Also, it no longer seems sure that the Fast Track Initiative, which is the most characteristic example of the change in practices subsequent to the Dakar Forum promoting the development and sharing of «credible plans» and formalizing the new orientations of international cooperation (harmonization, alignment, programme-aid), will benefit from the resources necessary for the fulfilment of its ambitions.

As the report shows, it is possible to increase enrolment without necessarily having to sacrifice quality: some countries, the majority, have indeed succeeded in reconciling significant growth in enrolments with quality of learning, while others have not. Over and above this result, which contrasts strongly with the common opinion on this subject and confirms the existence of policies enabling to reconcile the two objectives often presented as contradictory, the quality of primary education still remains problematic throughout the continent. In international comparisons, the African countries performing the best are distinctly outdistanced; at continental level, the proportion of children who reach a minimum threshold of learning is low, including in countries where primary education is already well developed. This is definitely one of the priorities for the coming years. It will involve devising new assessment instruments at continental level, and also promoting local

policies for managing quality in each country, as outlined in this report.

If work towards UPE is still ongoing and justifies remobilizing the international community, other sub-sectors now merit just as much attention: firstly, non-formal education and its contribution to the global policy for the fight against illiteracy and, secondly, the much more vast and complex issue of post-primary education.

Non-formal education will have an important role to play in coming years, not only because UPE is not yet a reality in many African countries, but because non-formal education can constitute a preparation for vocational training for many informal sector participants, and thus make integration of young people on the job market easier. The report shows that non-formal training can be effective, especially in literacy terms, but it suggests also that the lack of attention given to the question of assessing the programmes, undoubtedly, represents a serious handicap in the unavoidable competition with the resources mobilized for formal education. It is urgent to bring about a change in practices in this respect and to follow the example of primary education, where the increasing number of assessments has made it possible to identify « good practices », certainly contributing favourably to the mobilization from which it has benefited.

Post-primary education now demands urgent attention. In fact, it has always been an important issue, but perhaps necessarily neglected in order to ensure mobilization around a simple, evident and consensual goal enabling all national and international stakeholders to implement practices that totally renew the modalities of elaboration, financing and piloting of education policies. It has certainly also been neglected as it is very difficult to manage both technically and socially. There is no general agreement on the way to organize technical and vocational education, secondary education and tertiary education, and on the definition of their content, unlike for primary education where there were very clear markers; another sizeable difference with primary education is that most of these levels of education are not intended for universal access. Consideration must therefore be given to the technical and social principles of the rationing that will have to be applied.

The report deals, in length, with the issue of reforming post-primary education. It does so by giving priority to an orientation, which is the promotion of genuine sector policies, and to a

mode of analysis, which is an economic and financial assessment of the changes advisable for these levels of education. This point of view does not, of course, cover the whole subject. It defines areas of possibilities and should be a good starting point for a true in-depth debate on the content of the policies to be conducted.

The reform of post-primary education in Africa is not only justified by the recent growth in primary enrolments. It is also to do with the mission of these levels of education today; they are often not in phase with the context of many African countries, of little relevance in terms of content and quality, and finally are frequently out of touch with job opportunities. This situation calls for the implementation of genuine sector policies, embracing all educational levels with a rationale of trade-offs giving priority to the interests of society. The challenge faced by most African countries tomorrow is not to attain UPE, as they will do so, but to structure their overall education system, in order to make the most out of this important achievement. It is indeed urgent to design forms of technical and vocational education that will enable rapid integration of large cohorts of young people leaving primary school and other levels of education, to prepare and, for some countries, to implement sound basic education going beyond the traditional primary boundaries, and to improve quality in upper secondary and tertiary education, which, in moving away from international standards, are no longer able to play their role correctly. Listing the goals defines neither the reforms to be undertaken nor their scale. This goes well beyond what went towards achieving UPE, especially allowing for the fact that the reforms should make coherent and, in many cases, completely redefine the content of the different teachings.

These policies are extremely constrained. In financing terms, there are very few countries that would be in a position to sustain current paces of post-primary expansion in their budget framework in the medium term; as for opportunities, there is already serious imbalance in many countries, especially for the highest qualified individuals. This is the context in which « credible plans for the overall sector » must be defined.

These plans are not to be based on a single model; this would be totally unfounded in view of the variety of country situations, both in terms of structure and enrolment dynamics, as well as of economic situations and financing modalities. They

must firstly be guided by the systematic promotion of the interests of society. They do not necessarily call for common solutions due to the variety of possible modes of organization and financing, but for solutions that take the constraints mentioned earlier into account. Bearing this in mind, the report suggests some « benchmarks for action ». These concern priorities, the agenda, financing modalities and technical and institutional tools, which must be defined in order to embark upon the reforms. Thus, the debate is open and must necessarily be enlarged to take in many other dimensions; BREDA intends to be an active participant.

The Dakar Forum has undeniably launched new dynamics and fostered new practices, the results of which are now tangible. Now that the UPE border has been - or is about to be -crossed, there is, of course, still ground to be covered, and one can imagine that the next stretches will be all the easier to cross as they will be in line with this same context of ambition, dialogue and transparency.

Finally, anyone reading this report will realize that there is implicitly in the background the whole debate, which cannot be ignored, on the choices of the kind of society one wants to live in and which are, to a great extent, at the heart of many of the African education systems' problems and impasses.





## R E A D E R ' S   G U I D E

The report is structured in two parts:  
one analytical and one statistical.

### **The analytical section, starting with an outline of the overall issue comprises eight chapters :**

- The first chapter deals with the institutional changes that have taken place since the Dakar Forum and the introduction of monitoring mechanisms both at national and international level;
- The second chapter draws up the current situation of primary education halfway to reaching the deadline for the Dakar goals, tackles the dynamics at work and looks at updated perspectives for the 2015 horizon;
- The third chapter examines the level of development and the dynamics of post-primary education;
- The fourth chapter handles the quality of learning in the African school, from the angle of measuring, and that of managing, this issue;
- The fifth chapter looks into the place of non-formal education in the current EFA context, studying its social effects and the quality of learning;
- The sixth chapter tackles the issues related to the financial sustainability of post-primary education development strategies;
- The seventh chapter provides additional input, looking into the social and economic sustainability of the development of post-primary education;
- The eighth, and final, chapter summarizes the overall results and proposes new benchmarks for action.

### **The statistical section comprises two entries:**

- One entry per country, consisting of 53 double pages, one for each country on the continent ; the countries are in alphabetical order, in English;
- One entry per indicator, in the form of recap tables.

Definitions and methodological boxes complete the statistical section.

The report can be read on several levels and in different ways. However, the authors have intended to present the information, analysis and recommendations in such a way that they are structured in reference to each other.



# Introduction

Marking one third<sup>1</sup> of the time span set in Dakar in the year 2000 for reaching Universal Primary Education (UPE), this report establishes a fairly precise assessment of the trends observed in Africa and endeavours to identify the successes and failures, in order to learn useful lessons. It examines the consequences of the progress made towards UPE, particularly in terms of learning achievements and of the dynamics in the development of post-primary education, looking into the social, economic and financial sustainability of same. It draws the conclusion that genuine sector-wide policies are urgently needed in many countries, requiring new investigation instruments and new frameworks for action

**The Dakar Forum has undeniably changed the deal for the development of education.** The changes are manifest at institutional level, first of all, and are related to government and donor commitment. Secondly, much has been accomplished in terms of real progress towards the set goals. The march towards UPE has become a reality in Africa, even if, for many countries, this may not be achieved by 2015. This goes, hand in hand, with a reduction in gender inequalities in primary education and, to a lesser extent, a reduction in geographical disparities.

Negotiations around a « credible plan » have fostered in-depth and shared diagnosis on the way the sector operates. Activities are carried out within the enlarged framework of poverty reduction and support to development. Real progress has been made in terms of harmonization and aid alignment. **In many countries, local donor groups have set up a trusting dialogue with the governments, making it possible to move towards the globalization of actions** (programme and budget aid) and to cover current expenditure. These mechanisms will certainly undergo further change, especially regarding the development of rules for elaboration and decision-making for the common use of technical and financial partners. However, they do bear witness to the important changes that have already taken place in cooperation practices and mark the progressive disappearance of competition between stakeholders. The coordination of actions in the perspective of programme aid is gradually replacing the juxtaposition of projects that were developed outside the national administration, often with no real impact on the latter in terms of capacity of analysis and action. Today, each partner takes the risk of transparency, more so than in the past: governments, by registering the sectoral development programmes in documents open to social debate and explaining the financing modalities in detail; donors, in making their analysis and commitments public. The Fast Track Initiative has systematized this new type of relationship and is currently the most emblematic element of same. However, although there has been considerable international enlistment, it is far from addressing the needs and the commitments made. There have even been signs of a relative loss of impetus recently and this is cause for some concern.

**The international data used in this report show the undeniable progress accomplished in terms of primary enrolments in Africa :** there has been clear progress in access, and the efforts made on the supply side, as well as those devoted to mobilizing the populations, have been rewarded. There are still difficulties in terms of completion compromising the 2015 UPE goal for many countries. These are not to be systematically considered as a failing in mobilization for UPE in that they correspond to the intake of the most fragile populations (poverty, low demand for education ...) not attending school previously. At the same time, they do show the limitations of policies based primarily on supply and reinforce the need to allow for the characteristics of demand of the underprivileged populations: on an educational level first of all, by adopting teaching

1 With reference to the most recent data available (2004/05 and more rarely 2005/06).

practices and repetition more adapted to their specific situation; on the economic level secondly, free education possibly not being sufficient for the most destitute families as a condition for keeping children in school.

The assessment set out in this report is not limited to the significant changes registered in the accomplishments and mechanisms of cooperation. It also concerns the consequences of the general trend in scaling up enrolments. **It attempts to answer interrogations on the evolution of the quality of learning and on the place of non-formal education and specific literacy programmes in this general trend; and finally it looks at the concerns that may arise from the rapid development of post-primary education.**

The constraints weighing on the development of the education systems have led to lower standards for recruitment and training of teachers and also to frequently larger class size. These tendencies lead to concern as to whether progress towards UPE means a drop in the quality of learning. While such interrogations are legitimate and demonstrate the desire to make the most of the development of schooling, they are nevertheless in contradiction with the (limited number of) results from assessments of learning quality factors: these show, quite systematically, that a limited increase in average class size has little consequence on quality. In countries where it was possible to make direct comparisons, the educational effectiveness of « new » teachers was seen not to differ, on average, from that of those recruited at a higher level of initial training and who had benefited from longer training. In the report, household surveys give similar results and do not bring out a systematic negative connection between quantitative development of primary education and quality of education, measured by the proportion of sustainable literate adults after a full course of primary education. **Most countries seem to have managed a growth in enrolments while maintaining the quality of learning.** This is also confirmed by the little temporal data available in terms of measuring pupil learning achievements. Some countries have clearly improved coverage of primary education without a drop in quality, and others have not managed to keep the balance between quantity and quality. In this area, the choice of the most efficient policies is therefore decisive and the quantity/quality trade-off is not a prerequisite.

Concerns as to the place of non-formal education and literacy in the general move for the promotion of EFA are certainly justified by the limited attention given to them by governments and technical and financial partners (TFP). Whereas there will still be significant needs for many years to come, the lack of interest can be explained to some extent by the mediocre professionalism of the sector and the scarcity of information available on the coverage and effectiveness of devices in operation. A special effort has been put in to tackle this issue in the report. On analysing the available data, it can be seen that the **different programmes of non-formal education have principally a positive impact on literacy but only rarely enable changes in beneficiary behaviour, in particular with regards to birth control and health**, which are often considered to be positively connected to the implementation of these programmes. The processed data goes to confirm that these effects are also very variable from one country to another and that there are therefore some policies that are clearly more effective than others, and which should be defined. While enrolments have increased in primary education in recent years, the evolution in post-primary enrolments has been no less important. Beyond the mechanical effect connected to the development of primary education, **there is clearly a rise in demand for education in secondary and tertiary education.** This could legitimately be expected. Arguments in favour of UPE refer to the social benefits of the development of basic education. Broader dissemination of this level of education reduces its private value and constitutes a strong incentive to pursue education further, in a process where diploma-holders will be more visible in the competition for job vacancies. **The said growth in post-primary education must rapidly lead to more explicit provision for same in the definition and evolution of “credible” education system development plans**, which so far have focused mainly on securing financing for the expansion of primary education. The issue of the physical and financial



sustainability of the development of post-primary education is raised, just like that of its economic and social sustainability.

There are very few African countries in a position to sustain the current growth patterns in secondary and tertiary education enrolments in the long term, within the present financing framework. Projections bring to light very high financing gaps that could possibly result in considerable deterioration of conditions of intake and of quality of education and could compromise UPE stabilization (maintaining access, improved survival and quality). Judging from the delays already registered in financing UPE by the international community, there is not much hope of the latter covering additional expenditure.

The issue of the economic and social sustainability of the development of post-primary education is more delicate to handle as, more than on primary level, there is significant divergence of individual and community interests. The generalization of literacy is of benefit to the community through its positive impact on economic and social development. It brings individuals, aside from productivity gains in a large spectrum of activities, the satisfaction of a fundamental right. **Community benefits gained from the development of post-primary education depend above all upon their economic relevance, in quantity and in quality.** Now, many countries are already in a situation of imbalance on these two aspects: general education is over-represented as opposed to vocational education and training; unemployment of diploma-holders has long been a structural reality, with the number of graduates coming out of tertiary education exceeding, sometimes ridiculously, the number of job vacancies of this level in the formal sector (senior management, middle management). This situation of job shortage gives rise to a vicious circle, a race for qualifications and the perpetuation of student status, which again steps up the demand for education. Over time, individual interests (positioning on the market) diverge totally from community interests (benefit of employment in the branches corresponding to the education received). In this context, for countries already in a situation of pronounced imbalance, stepping up the demand for post-primary education will lead to situations that are economically, socially and politically unmanageable.

Integrating these issues into education system development plans is far from easy, as this is out of the consensual area accompanying and justifying support to UPE ; these policies are less well affirmed technically and more distressing socially. By definition, there is no quantitative restriction for UPE and it does not pose insurmountable problems of implementation. **Managing post-primary education, which has, of course, a shifting border with primary education that may or may not include access to lower secondary education, is a more delicate issue. As individual regulation is hardly effective, it is appropriate to implement processes for controlling and directing pupil flow.** These two activities present relatively interdependent technical and social problems. Technically, the number of individuals to be trained at the different levels and types of education has to be determined, and the levels and types of education, as well as the most useful fields of study, defined; these activities also require procedures to be set up, leading individuals to make choices in line with the interests of society as a whole. Socially, the question raised is directly connected to the existence of rationing and the basis of same.

There are no simple solutions to the technical and social issues raised by the management of post-primary education. It is undoubtedly this very complexity that has often led to avoiding them in the past. Projections in enrolments and in financial terms, set out in this report, justify raising them urgently and taking the risk of defining some «benchmarks for action». These benchmarks concern the technical conditions of regulation and direction of pupil flow and the most socially fair management of financial coverage of a part of post-primary education by the families ; this is inevitable in some countries, on account of the low financial sustainability of the development of these levels of education.

**The first of these benchmarks is the reference to a genuine sector-wide vision.** It is of little interest to consider the improvements that can be made in each sub-sector without reference to the global constraint of coherence in its productions related to the needs of society and to the constraint of public funding. These constraints reinforce the need to define priorities: **completing UPE in the best possible conditions, preparing a rapid transition to extended basic education, maintaining quality in secondary and tertiary education, and finally and above all, developing relevant technical and vocational education with the integration of young people as its primary objective.** This will oblige many countries to introduce flow regulation. For those countries still very much behind with primary completion, the hypothesis of rapid generalization of nine or ten years basic education is not a very realistic option, even if this should be taken into consideration as a medium-term objective.

**The second benchmark is to give preference to a pragmatic approach in restructuring the overall sector.** While it seems difficult today to identify the short-term needs of the different labour markets, one can at least, through succinct analysis of the markets, estimate orders of magnitude corresponding to the capacities for absorbing leavers from the different levels and types of education. At the more refined level of branches and occupations, solutions will arise from close interweaving of the sectors of education and those of production, and also from aggressive economic policies aimed at strategic sectors to be combined with targeted training actions. At this point, it is no longer a question of sector-wide policies but of multi-sectoral policies demanding aggressive political will.

**The third benchmark has to do with the need for integrating the social dimension in all the issues of pupil flow regulation.** Rationing access to studies, through competitive examinations and/or private funding of a part of the costs of education, is often rejected on the pretext that it penalizes the poorest. The argument deserves to be taken into consideration in order to effectively open the debate. In concrete terms, this boils down to suggesting that direct financing by the families of a part of the costs of post-primary education could also be used to fuel a grant programme for post-primary schooling for the poorest, but also for primary schooling, where the provision of free education is not enough to guarantee school attendance by the most underprivileged.

The challenge of post-primary flow regulation should not settle for privatization of education, a frightening prospect often capable of staving off the debate. With the exception of vocational education and training, which makes sense through direct partnership with market stakeholders, the elements designated here concern the restoration of a national public education and training policy, for the overall sector. The private financing of a part of education costs does not only have to make up for low national public resources. It also aims at breaking the vicious circle mentioned earlier by realigning public and private interests. If the provision of quality education can facilitate rapid integration, then the rise in the private cost of education can be compensated for by a rise in real benefits (and not only relative benefits like in a situation of competition for employment). It gives the government the possibility of flexible incentives and offers a solution enabling deployment of the resources necessary for the development of a genuine social policy for the promotion of the poorest through schooling. That does of course not mean that there would not be room for a sizeable private education sector for secondary and tertiary education. It is rather a question of defining the conditions of a real public private partnership, which only has a signification in reference to the restoration of a public sector capable of dictating standards and quality references.

The main lesson to be learnt from this report and from the perspectives indicated by the trends registered since the Dakar Forum is undoubtedly the need to refocus on national specificities. In this context, **the fourth and final benchmark concerns the necessary evolution of the instruments and frameworks for action specific to the definition, assessment and determination of these sector policies.** In a genuine sector-wide perspective, the diagnosis instruments used for examining education systems and defining educational policies must, in the future, enable finer consideration of all the sub-sectors and extend analysis of the employment situation on the basis of new data to be produced. In the same way, the evaluation of financial leeway, based on simulation models aimed first and foremost at securing national and international financing for primary education, should be extended to specific policies envisaged for all the other sub-sectors. It can be asked whether the frameworks for dialogue and action, in which trade-offs have taken place since the Dakar Forum, have the necessary capacity to handle more complex issues than before. In the same manner, the advocacy activity of the different EFA monitoring bodies should be extended to this sectoral vision; this is also the case of the TFP coordination groups who implement new aid principles. In general, these frameworks for action will undoubtedly have to significantly increase their technical capacity for analysis and guidance, in order to play an effective role in supporting these more complex policies.