



A black and white photograph of a young child's face and hands, with a blue graphic overlay containing text. The child's face is partially visible on the left side, looking towards the right. Their hands are visible at the bottom, reaching out. A large blue shape, resembling a speech bubble or a stylized hand, is overlaid on the right side of the image. Inside this blue shape, the text is written in white. The text reads: "Reaching *the* Unreached *in* Education *in* Asia-Pacific to Meet the EFA Goals by 2015: A Commitment to Action".

Reaching *the* Unreached
in Education *in* Asia-Pacific
to Meet the EFA Goals by 2015:
A Commitment to Action

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Acronyms

AIMS	Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit
APPEAL	Asia and Pacific Programme of Education for All
ARNEC	Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
ARTC	APPEAL Resources and Training Consortium
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
ATD	All Together in Dignity (Forth world)
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CapEFA	Capacity Development for EFA
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CLCC	Creating Learning Communities for Children
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF)
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EDI	EFA Development Index
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPR	Education Policy and Reform
ERP	Education for Rural People
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESIS	Educational Statistical Information System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GENIA	Gender in Education Network in Asia
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LAMP	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MDA	[EFA] Mid-Decade Assessment
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFEMIS	Non-Formal Education Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics (International)
SC	Save the Children
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Thematic Working Group
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

Acknowledgement

Progress in promoting discussion and concerted action on reaching the unreached and underserved populations in education to meet the Education for All (EFA) goals would not be possible without the active participation of representatives from countries in the region. We wish to thank representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Malaysia, the Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Niue, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Tokelau, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam. Representatives from these countries have participated in the regional endeavour towards reaching the unreached in education, including various regional, sub-regional and national level meetings, workshops, policy discussions and other related activities. Much of the content of this report came from recommendations given by these representatives.

Outcomes of discussions from the **10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators: Strategic planning towards reaching the unreached in education and meeting the EFA goals by 2015**, held in Bangkok, Thailand in May 2009 have specifically been highlighted in this report, marking the culmination of the whole EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) and Mid-Term Policy Review process. We wish to thank the participants of the workshop: the designated National EFA/EFA MDA Coordinators and other education officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Republic of Korea (observer), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tonga.

Our appreciation also goes to EFA partners in the region, embodied by the Regional Thematic Working Group (TWG) on EFA, for their unwavering support and active participation in the whole EFA MDA and Mid-Term Policy Review process. In particular, we wish to thank representatives of ASPBAE, ATD Fourth World, Baha'i International, E-Net Philippines, Save the Children Sweden, SEAMEO, SIL International, UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank for their participation in the *10th National EFA Coordinators Meeting* in May 2009. The participation of education staff from the UNESCO offices in Almaty, Apia, Bangkok, Beijing, Dhaka, Kathmandu, New Delhi, Phnom Penh, Tashkent and Tehran as well as UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Montreal further enriched the discussion which is documented in this report. UNICEF education staff from the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), New Delhi, Phnom Penh and Yangon also participated.

We also wish to thank the Education sector of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, and in particular the staff of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics – Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (UIS-AIMS) Unit for coordinating and leading the MDA process. UIS-AIMS Unit staff, past and present, were responsible for compiling this report, including Simon Ellis, Nyi Nyi Thuang, Malisa Santigul, Debbie Wong, Leotes Lugo Helin and most importantly Ko-Chih Tung, who was the main architect of the MDA process.

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Preface

As we enter the new decade of 2010, we are nearly two-thirds of the way to 2015. It is imperative for countries and EFA partners to accelerate efforts and focus resources on reaching the unreached, marginalized and disadvantaged in education. Identifying who the unreached groups are, where they are, and why they continue to be excluded is important for ensuring that effective and targeted policies, strategies and actions are developed and implemented so that countries reach the EFA goals by 2015 and no one is left behind.

The progress and gaps in the achievement of national and global EFA targets were examined in the EFA MDA, which came at the mid-way point of the 2000 to 2010 decade. Countries identified the remaining gaps in terms of quality and equity, at a sub-national level, with a focus on disadvantaged and excluded populations. With these findings, countries conducted Mid-Term Policy Reviews to see how they could better formulate policies for attaining EFA by 2015.

This publication is a compilation of policy recommendations and strategies for the Asia-Pacific region and its sub-regions for reaching the unreached in education to meet the EFA goals by 2015. Developed by country representatives, it builds on the EFA MDA and Mid-Term Policy Reviews, converting the recommendations made as part of these processes into plans and concrete activities.

EFA partners in the Asia-Pacific region have indicated how they will be able to support countries in making these plans and activities into a reality. Countries and EFA partners will need to work even more closely in the future to meet the EFA goals, and bring the unreached groups into the education system.



Gwang-Jo Kim

*Director
UNESCO Bangkok*

Foreword

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region, with financial and technical support and coordination by the UIS-AIMS Unit, in collaboration with UNICEF and the TWG on EFA, carried out the MDA of EFA and Mid-Term Policy Reviews from 2006 to 2009.

From these processes it was clear that despite positive progress in the region, meeting the EFA goals by 2015 would be impossible if countries failed to meet the needs of the unreached population who have no access to education, are in school but not learning, or are in danger of dropping out for various reasons.

Building on the EFA MDA and Mid-Term Policy Review Conferences, country representatives and EFA partners met in Bangkok, Thailand, on 4-7 May 2009 for the *10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators*. The meeting focused on "strategic planning towards reaching the unreached in education and meeting the EFA goals by 2015." Participants produced a set of regional policy recommendations and regional and sub-regional strategies for reaching the unreached in education to ensure that countries meet the EFA goals with no one left behind by 2015. EFA partners have responded to these and signified areas in which they can provide support.

This report documents the breadth and depth of the recommendations that came out from the *10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators* and it is hoped that it can be used as a reference for governments, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, civil society groups and other relevant groups in Asia-Pacific and beyond, that are intent on addressing the issues of marginalization and disparities in education.

More importantly, this publication is called *A Commitment to Action*. It is designed to provide an outline of the policies, strategies and actions proposed by country representatives for the region and each sub-region, and the commitments made by EFA partners. For a real chance at meeting the EFA goals by 2015, countries and EFA partners need to work collaboratively and make good on their commitments.

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Simon Ellis

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Excerpts from UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education Nicholas Burnett's¹ Keynote Speech at the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators

The theme of this meeting: "Strategic Planning Towards Reaching the Unreached in Education and Meeting the EFA Goals by 2015" undoubtedly sums up the number one challenge for education policy making. As the presentation of the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2009 will underline, disparities based on wealth, location, gender and disability are denying millions of children and youth a good-quality education.

The theme is all the more opportune in this time of financial and economic crisis because it is the most vulnerable and marginalized groups that risk being pushed deeper into poverty. This has obvious consequences for education.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to engage with National EFA coordinators, country delegates and other EFA partners because it is only through coordination and dialogue at the country level that we will succeed in accelerating progress towards EFA.

Today, as a general introduction I would like to put this meeting in an international perspective by giving you a brief overview of UNESCO's role as lead coordinating agency for EFA; share views on the impact of the financial crisis and put forward some key priorities for responding to the crisis, emphasizing the importance of a long-term vision and the contribution of education to social cohesion and economic recovery.

As the lead coordinating agency for EFA, we have several roles. First, we are a convener and coordinator. Over the past eight years we have developed well established coordination mechanisms at global, regional and country level. International policy coordination is more crucial than ever in the context of today's financial and economic crisis. The High Level Group on EFA in Oslo, December 2008 came up with an action-oriented declaration that rallies all partners around a common set of priorities – the centrality of education for development, making equity a priority in all education policies, addressing the teacher shortage and scaling up financing. The International Conference on Education, held November 2008 in Geneva, was entirely focused on the theme of inclusive education as the way of the future, which ties in neatly with this meeting.

Second, our role is also as coordinator to promote knowledge sharing, exchange and dissemination of best practice and south-south cooperation. It is also to keep the comprehensive perspective of Dakar – and indeed of Jomtien – alive on policy agendas and in planning – in poverty reduction strategies and national education plans for example. This is important because a narrow focus on, for example, just primary education will not be as effective as ensuring learn opportunities at different levels and understanding the connections that exist between these. Young children from vulnerable backgrounds have a better chance of attending primary school if they have received health care, nutrition and stimulation through early childhood programmes. It is more likely that a literate mother will send her child – especially her daughter – to school. So this holistic perspective encourages inclusion.

Third, our role is to promote more coherence at the country level and provide high-level technical expertise in response to needs. Here I would like to draw your attention to a joint letter signed by the heads of UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank, the five convening agencies of the World Education Forum, and sent last month (April 2009) to all resident coordinators and staff. The agency heads pledge to intensify collaboration in support of national-led EFA efforts, especially in the most EFA-challenged countries. The letter outlines a series of priority areas where we will

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1 Nicholas Burnett left UNESCO in October 2009 and is now the Principal and Managing Director of the Results for Development Institute in Washington D.C., USA

scale up joint action, for example, enhancing inter-sectoral policy coordination; helping countries to manage national educational processes and support for national and regional information management to better inform policy. This letter represents an important signal on the part of the Dakar convening agencies to work more closely together at country level drawing on their comparative advantage.

The global financial crisis and its impact on education

The real question is the impact of the crisis on the poorest countries and on the most marginalized populations – which fits exactly with the theme of this meeting. The financial crisis started with the collapse of investment banks and has erupted into a full-fledged economic crisis that threatens to drive between 50 million and 90 million people into extreme poverty. An additional 200,000 to 400,000 infants could die each year between now and 2015. The number of chronically hungry people is expected to rise. In just a few months, export-dependent countries registered steep job losses. We are faced with a global human crisis of untold proportions – what the World Bank has described as no less than a development emergency.

We know that poverty increases in times of crisis and that the most vulnerable are hardest hit. The East Asia crisis of the 1990s offers some insight. A regional study by UNESCO/IIEP found that health and education budgets declined in several countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines). Parents withdrew older children from school and delayed the entry of the youngest. Child labour increased in several countries. But paradoxically, demand for the public provision of education rose in East Asia as parents pulled children out of private schools. This trend was observed at all levels of education.

So what do we have to do?

First, policies must protect the most vulnerable. Several East Asian countries in the 1990s introduced social safety net schemes including block transfers to families to keep children in school and scholarship programs. Singapore pledged not to cut its research and development budget in order to maintain its competitiveness.

We need a stimulus package for countries most in need. It is encouraging that the G20 Summit delivered a USD1.1 trillion stimulus package to boost the world economy and promised to channel USD50 billion to support social protection, trade and development in low-income countries. But it is still unclear how easily and quickly funds will be disbursed for human development, including education.

Governments are going to be faced with very tough choices – they were before the crisis but now the situation is much. Weak fiscal capacity will limit the scope for the world's poorest countries to insulate their citizens from the crisis. Research by the EFA Global Monitoring Report team finds that 43 out of 48 low-income countries lack the capacity to provide a pro-poor fiscal stimulus. Lao PDR, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands are among these countries. In Central Asia so are Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Tajikistan. Cambodia and Lao PDR are already among the low EFA Development Index (EDI) countries so this reduced margin of maneuver in terms of public financing puts EFA progress in real jeopardy.

Against this backdrop one of the first responsibilities we have is to reaffirm the centrality of education for human, social and economic development. Investing in education is part of the response to the crisis and governments must be convinced of this.

We have to advocate countercyclical spending to spur recovery and support more robust and inclusive growth. Cuts in education spending, even minor, could put a whole generation at risk. Instead of a short-term vision, we need to promote short-term synergies: public employment schemes for teachers, scaled up technical and vocational education, and ensure that inclusion is the backbone of all policies.

We must focus on countries most in need and press donor countries to increase international aid. The 22% drop in aid to basic education in 2007 seriously jeopardizes future progress towards Education for All and more broadly towards all the human development goals. And this was before the crisis.

We must carefully monitor the impact of the crisis, in particular on education. The G20 has called on the UN to take a lead role in this area. But we have to act now – by setting up rapid analysis and response mechanisms.

Meeting the EFA goals

We will only move more rapidly towards EFA by acting on exclusion's causes, by designing and implementing policies founded in a concern for equity, by improving quality to make sure that students are acquiring basic skills, and through efficient and effective financing.

Education cannot be viewed in disconnect with the wider social environment. Poverty clearly remains a major obstacle to progress. Large in-country disparities prevail in the region with children from the wealthiest 20% of households (Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines) having much higher primary net attendance rates (close or above 90%) while rates among children from the poorest quintile are much lower. In Viet Nam, Philippines and Indonesia more than half the children not attending school are from the poorest quintile, hence the need for special incentives to make education rather than work, the preferred option for the poorest families.

Breaking inequalities – whether due to income, cultural factors, disability, living in a rural area or urban slum, speaking a minority language – are key to accelerating progress. There is no one size answer – policies must be targeted to specific needs and situations. This is the nature of inclusion.

Message from UNICEF

Congratulations to all partners involved in the Asia-Pacific EFA Mid-Decade Assessment process, recommendations of which are documented in this publication: Commitment to Action. Reaching marginalized and disadvantaged groups is a key challenge to achieving Education for All by 2015. UNICEF is happy to acknowledge that the recommendations and actions presented in this document have been the result of a true bottom-up process. Ministry of Education staff at different levels, national statistics offices, UN agencies, NGOs, the private sector and academics, have all collaborated through a series of workshops, consultations, data collection, report writing and reviews – and the lessons learned from these activities formulate the basis for this Commitment to Action. They have come from countries themselves through the evolving partnerships within national and regional education working groups and committees and the National EFA Committees and their members.

In the lead up to 2015, the actions and recommendations presented in the Commitment to Action will complement national and local efforts to achieve quality education for all. However, this document will be most effective if the marginalized and disadvantaged groups who have yet to receive a quality education are properly identified, by providing education officials and planners a better understanding of who is unreached and why. To do so, it will be important for countries to utilize disaggregated data collected from a combination of sources and to identify unreached populations at the sub-national level — geographically, ethnically, linguistically — and across a variety of physical, social, political and economic barriers.

By understanding who is unreached and the reasons why, innovative policies can be developed to effectively target education for those in need. Through the recommendations presented in this document, policies can then be translated into concrete actions to supplement ongoing efforts to achieve quality education for all. Depending on needs in the national context, actions may include, for example, strengthening data collection processes to identify marginalized groups, promoting education for girls or adolescent boys through conditional incentives, enhancing non-formal equivalency programmes, developing multilingual literacy materials, incorporating interactive pedagogy and early learning strategies into pre-service teacher education, engaging non-traditional education partners including the private sector and faith-based organizations, and capacity-building for policy makers beyond the education sector.

As 2015 approaches, it is ever more important for countries to identify those pockets of children facing the greatest education disadvantage – and to prepare policies, interventions and budgets to address their basic educational rights. This is the only way in which we can achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2 and 3 with equity, or the Education for All (EFA) Goals for 2015.



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1. Executive Summary

Reaching the unreached and marginalized in education is imperative for countries intent on meeting the goals of Education for All (EFA) by 2015. Countries in the Asia-Pacific region, with financial and technical support and coordination by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics – Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (UIS-AIMS) Unit, in collaboration with the UNESCO Education Sector, UNICEF and the Regional Thematic Working Group (TWG) on EFA, carried out the Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) of EFA and Mid-Term Policy Review from 2006 to 2009. The assessment showed that although significant gains have been made in the Asia-Pacific region towards the goals, targets will be missed if countries fail to tackle barriers to education and address persistent inequalities that continue to obstruct the disadvantaged populations' ability to access and participate in education and obtain the knowledge, skills and opportunities to realize their potential and participate actively in political and social life. The challenge is meeting the needs of the unreached population who has no access to education, is in school but not learning, or are in danger of dropping out for various reasons.

Across the region, the unreached population includes: learners from remote, rural and isolated areas; learners from linguistic and ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, and minority religious groups; girls and women, especially from rural and ethnic minorities; underperforming boys including those that are at risk or have dropped out; children from migrant families, refugees and stateless children; learners with disabilities and special needs; children in difficult circumstances; learners from very poor families; child labourers, street children, trafficked children and abused children; children affected or infected by HIV and AIDS; and orphans and abandoned children. Many learners suffer from multiple disadvantages associated with being members of particular communities that result in them being socially stigmatized as well as suffering from the specific conditions listed above. Although data collection in the region has improved over the years with much data disaggregated by sex and geographical region, data for most of the groups mentioned above remains rare.

To ensure that policy recommendations made as part of the Asia-Pacific EFA MDA and Mid-Term Policy Review are converted into plans and concrete activities, the *10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators* held on 4-7 May 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand focused on "strategic planning towards reaching the unreached in education and meeting the EFA goals by 2015." Participants at

the meeting produced a set of regional policy recommendations, and regional and sub-regional strategies, for reaching the unreached in education to ensure that countries meet the EFA goals with no one left behind by 2015. The consultative process of preparing the sub-regional and regional strategies facilitated partnership and collaboration among all concerned – countries and EFA partners – to work even more closely in the future towards meeting the EFA goals, with a special focus on those unreached groups that still cannot exercise their right to education.

The regional policy recommendations and regional strategies focused on six cross-cutting themes – inclusive education and gender and social equality, literacy and non-formal education (NFE), quality of education, monitoring and evaluation, financing and governance, and partnerships and coordination – which were linked to seven strategic objectives focused on reaching the unreached in education.

Sub-regional strategies were developed for East and South-East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and the Pacific. Although each sub-region has its own challenges and priority areas, a number of strategies to address the needs of the unreached in education recommended during the meeting had common approaches across the Asia-Pacific. These include:

- Strengthening existing data collection processes to provide information on unreached groups to support evidence-based decision-making processes
- Policy-making, intervention and initiatives to explicitly target the unreached groups, including out-of-school children and youth, those at risk of dropping out of school, geographically isolated groups, ethnic and linguistic minorities, etc.
- Initiatives to promote and support education for girls and women
- Comprehensive policies on literacy, which also address learning assessment, mother tongue-based multilingual literacy programmes and the need to create literate environments
- Equivalency programmes which create synergies between non-formal and formal education systems
- Standards and norms for teacher and facilitator competencies, which address inclusion and learner-centred teaching-learning processes and environments
- Life-skills and sustainable education from a lifelong perspective, that is relevant for learners and delivered using alternative and flexible approaches
- Capacity-building of decision-makers in evidence-based policy making and planning, management and budgeting for inclusion

EFA partners, development financing and technical agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), advocacy organizations, etc., have responded to the recommended policies, strategies and actions proposed by country representatives for the region and each sub-region, and signified areas in which they can provide support for meeting EFA by 2015. It is hoped that EFA partners promptly follow up on these commitments and to ensure that their activities align with those of all the countries in Asia-Pacific. Countries and EFA partners need to work closely together to ensure that the EFA goals are reached by 2015 and no one is left behind.

2. Background

2.1 History of EFA

At the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (March 1990), delegates from 155 countries and representatives of 160 organizations affirmed their collective commitment to education as a human right and pledged to address the basic learning needs of all by the end of the decade. Targets and strategies for providing universal access and improving equity and learning were enshrined in the *Jomtien Framework for Action for Meeting the Basic Learning Needs*. However, by the year 2000 assessments showed that the goals set in Jomtien had not been achieved. Thus at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (April 2000), 1,100 participants from 164 countries reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015, specifically the six major goals and 12 major strategies identified in the *Dakar Framework for Action*. The framework placed the main responsibility for achieving the EFA goals on Member States, which were encouraged and supported in their development of national plans of action. See <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/efa/efa-background> for further information.

The six global EFA goals in the expanded vision of the Dakar Framework for Action

- Goal 1:** Expanding and improving comprehensive **early childhood care and education**, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- 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**.
- Goal 3:** Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate **learning and life skills** programmes.
- Goal 4:** Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of **adult literacy** by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to **basic and continuing education** for all adults.
- 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.
- 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.

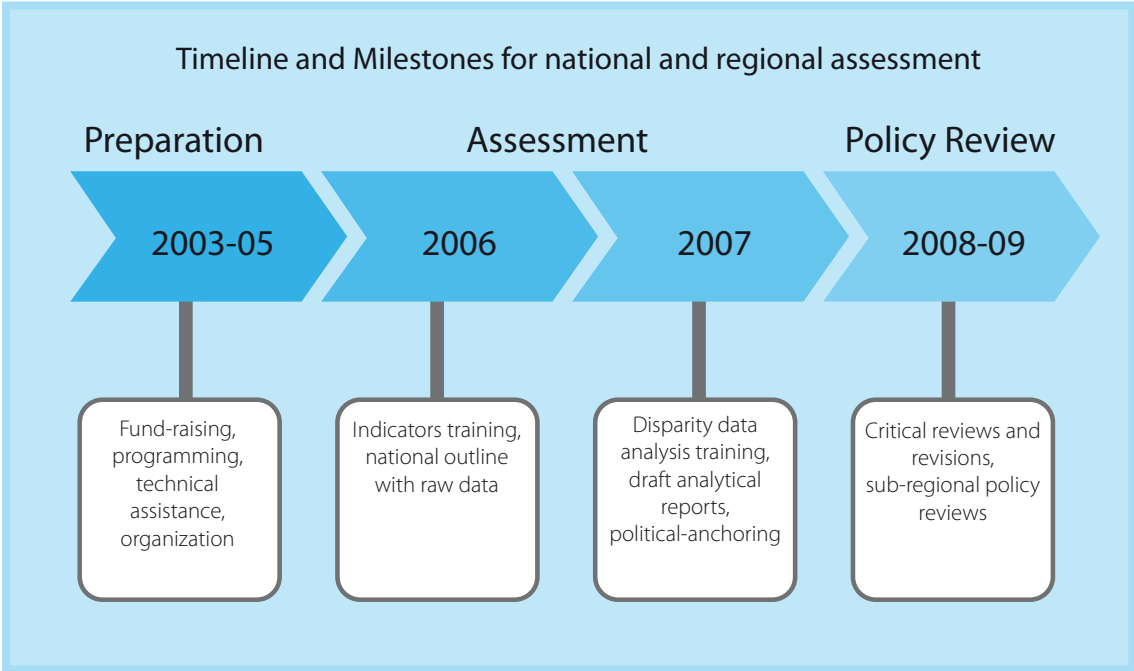
2.2 The EFA Mid-Decade Assessment and Mid-Term Policy Review

The *Dakar Framework for Action* foresaw the need for regular monitoring and reporting of progress and gaps in the achievement of EFA as a basis for continuous review of national policy and international support towards EFA. The “Dakar Follow-Up Strategies” stated this explicitly and clearly in its Strategy 11, which refers to the need to “systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels.”

Following the Dakar conference, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) as the principal EFA coordinating agency in the Asia-Pacific region, convened an annual meeting of the National EFA Coordinators to formulate and share their post-Dakar EFA National Action Plans. UNESCO Bangkok also chaired the TWG on EFA¹ which initially consisted of the UN EFA Convening Agencies, serving primarily as a forum for inter-agency exchange of information on activities related to supporting EFA in the region. The TWG on EFA is among the working groups under the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism.

In 2003 the UIS established its Office of the Regional Advisor for the Asia-Pacific within UNESCO Bangkok as part of its mandate for national statistical capacity-building and EFA observatory. To launch its regional programme for implementing the Dakar Follow-up Strategy 11, in November 2003 the UIS Regional Office convened national education planners and statisticians in Asia and the Pacific. This commenced its programme for developing national and regional capacity in assessment, information systems, monitoring and statistics to prepare for the EFA MDA and Mid-Term Policy Review for Asia and the Pacific. From 2003 the UIS-AIMS Unit conducted a series of supporting activities. This included mobilizing financial support for the entire MDA process including the cost of national assessment processes, preparing application tools and templates, conducting training workshops covering the sub-regions, organizing and advising country assessment processes under the theme of “Reaching the Unreached and the Underserved”, and coordinating sub-regional policy reviews.

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1 Its functions include information sharing, establishing priority areas for cooperation and potential joint programme responses, disseminating best practices in EFA, and supporting countries in attaining EFA. The TWG is steered through a coordinating committee and chaired by UNESCO Bangkok with UNICEF as co-chair.

Thirty-five countries in the Asia-Pacific region participated in the MDA. The MDA covered the technical assessment of progress and gaps in meeting the EFA goals at the half-way point of the decade (2000-2010). The assessment was followed by a mid-term review of education policies and reforms aimed at expanding the provision of education across various strata and groups in society, especially to reach the unreached groups.

From 2006 to 2007 most participating countries organized national advisory committees and technical assessment teams, many of whom had earlier participated in formulating EFA National Action Plans. Statistics units compiled EFA monitoring indicators for measuring progress and gaps in attaining EFA goals and targets and compiled national statistical reports, whilst subject specialists and departmental officials reviewed case studies and evaluation reports of their programmes. For evidence-based “reaching the unreached” strategy, an important mission of the assessment was to identify, quantify and locate the remaining proportion of the target groups of the respective EFA goal who have been excluded from education, as well as the reason for their exclusion – such as poverty, physical or learning disability, language barrier, gender and social inequality, and racial and ethnic discrimination. Many participating countries invited national stakeholders and EFA-supporting partners to participate in reviewing the progress and gaps towards meeting the EFA goals.

TWG member agencies and organizations provided advisory and support services to MDA participating countries starting in 2006. Other EFA supporting partners, international NGOs, civil society organizations and special interest advocacy groups were also invited to extend support and assistance. The UIS-AIMS Unit served as the TWG Secretariat. TWG members in 2007-2008 reviewed and advised on draft national EFA MDA reports, participated in the policy review conferences and indicated their support for the implementation of the recommended strategies and actions for reaching EFA by 2015.

By the end of 2008, over 25 countries that had participated in the Asia-Pacific EFA MDA process had completed their national reports. In South Asia and West Asia, these were Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran (draft), the Maldives, Mongolia (update of the 2005 assessment report), Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; and in East and South-East Asia, they were People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand (draft) and Viet Nam (draft). In the Pacific region, Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands and the Republic of Marshall Islands completed their national reports; and in Central Asia, they were Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (draft). These national reports have been used for education planning and have been a catalyst for more focus and action aimed at reaching the unreached and disadvantaged groups in education. To download the available Asia-Pacific EFA MDA national reports, go to <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/efa/mda/nationalreports>.

The UIS-AIMS Unit and UNESCO Bangkok, in collaboration and consultation with countries and the TWG on EFA, drafted sub-regional synthesis EFA MDA reports for four sub-regions in Asia and the Pacific:

- The Mekong Sub-Region covering Viet Nam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar
- The Insular South-East Asia Sub-Region covering the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia
- The South Asia Sub-Region covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan
- The Central Asia Sub-Region covering Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (prepared by UNESCO Almaty)

See <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/efa/mda/sub-regionalreport> to download these reports.

The objectives of the sub-regional synthesis reports were to identify patterns unique to each sub-region concerning the remaining target groups (e.g. Hindu caste system in South Asia; deep-rooted traditional high status for scholarship and education in East Asia) and those shared with other sub-regions in Asia (e.g. ethno-linguistic barriers; socio-economic stratification) and the Pacific, as well as identify the obstacles and the strategies used to overcome them (e.g. earmarked budget for incentive grants to schools and scholarships to support inclusion of girls of the untouchable caste in Nepal) to accelerate progress toward EFA by 2015. The reports contain input from many different sources – reports and studies submitted by EFA partners, development agencies and members of the TWG on EFA; country national reports and summary questionnaires; and internationally standardized and comparable EFA monitoring indicators from the UIS.

Mid-term policy reviews were undertaken in 2008, the half-way point to 2015, with the objective that countries would compare their existing national education policies against the findings of their national MDAs, to better formulate appropriate policies for attaining EFA by 2015. Sub-regional policy review conferences were conducted in South-East, South and Central Asia in 2008 with the support of EFA partners. Attended by senior policymakers and EFA Coordinators for each sub-region, these Mid-Term Policy Review Conferences led to specific sub-regional policy recommendations on how to address the obstacles faced by unreached groups and meet the EFA goals by 2015.

South-East Asia's Mid-Term Policy Review, held from 18-21 February 2008 in Jomtien, Thailand, led to a commitment by South-East Asian Ministers of Education to work on specific projects on reaching the unreached in education, which sparked a coordinated sub-regional response. See Annex 1 for a summary of the policy recommendations made for reaching the unreached in South-East Asia. Following the Jomtien Policy Review meeting, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat, UNESCO Bangkok and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat jointly organized a meeting of the 11 South-East Asian countries called *Reaching the Unreached: Meeting of South-East Asian Countries to Achieve the EFA Goals Together by 2015* (2-4 September 2008, Bangkok, Thailand) marking the beginning of a coordinated sub-regional approach to meeting the EFA goals. Through sharing best practices among themselves and with the EFA partners and international organizations, the SEAMEO Member Countries identified strategies and activities to address the needs of the prioritized unreached and underserved population groups. Finally, the concrete steps were drafted into project proposals for the different target groups. The three-day meeting produced ten collaborative activities on reaching the unreached groups in education which were later endorsed at the SEAMEO High Officials Meeting and the 44th SEAMEO Council Conference in December 2008 and April 2009, respectively. See Annex 2 for further details on the SEAMEO project proposals.

South-Asia's Mid-Term Policy Review Conference was held from 16-19 June 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Following the May 2009 EFA Coordinators meeting reported in this document, the South Asian countries decided to make "reaching the unreached" the theme of the Second Ministerial Meeting of South Asia EFA Forum in Dhaka, Bangladesh (13-14 December 2009). At this meeting, ministers and high level government officials representing eight South Asian countries agreed to step up their efforts to eliminate illiteracy from the sub-region by 2015. Participants from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan and Afghanistan discussed the inclusion of out-of-school children from the most marginalized sections of society and the mobilization of resources for education. As part of the meeting, the Dhaka Declaration was formulated where countries committed to allocate 6% of their GDP for education. The Dhaka Declaration also highlighted the need to identify causes of exclusion, amending or establishing new laws related to unreached groups, strengthening institutional capacity for education planning and management and ensuring participation of all stakeholders including the media, civil society and NGOs.

Central Asia also organized a policy review as part of the *Central Asia EFA Coordinators Meeting* on 10 December 2008 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The findings of the Central Asia Sub-Regional EFA MDA Report were also presented at the Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan (CARK) 7th Forum on Education (15-17 September 2009) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Participants to the CARK Education Forum noted that the MDA showed progress in EFA in Central Asia as well the challenges to meeting the EFA goals. Recommendations made in the report are also under implementation.

Both South Asia and Central Asia sub-regions developed a set of policy recommendations on reaching the unreached. See Annexes 3 and 4.

Pacific Island Countries have also taken a sub-regional approach to meeting the EFA goals. Ministers of Education of the Pacific Islands Forum met in Nuku'alofa, Tonga on 24-26 March 2009, and endorsed the *Pacific Education Development Framework* as the region's revised education plan to meet global education commitments and the specific needs and obstacles in education in the Pacific region. See <http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific%20Education%20Development%20Framework%202009-2015.pdf>.

2.3 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators

To translate policy recommendations proposed as part of the Asia-Pacific EFA MDA and Mid-Term Policy Reviews into national and regional plans and concrete activities, the *10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators* (4-7 May 2009, Bangkok, Thailand) focused on "strategic planning towards reaching the unreached in education and meeting the EFA goals by 2015." The meeting also encouraged countries to improve and institutionalize their EFA monitoring and evaluation systems with an emphasis on collecting data on unreached and disadvantaged groups and using this information for evidence-based planning.

Participants at the meeting produced a set of regional policy recommendations, and regional and sub-regional strategies, for reaching the unreached in education and meeting the EFA goals by 2015. These are presented in detail in Section 4. Participants also endorsed the proposal to conduct an evaluation of the whole MDA process, which will allow all EFA partners at the national and international level to build on lessons learned from the MDA for future major EFA assessments.

The main participants of the meeting were the designated National EFA / EFA MDA Coordinators and other education officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Republic of Korea (observer), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tonga.

Representatives of the TWG on EFA were also present, including ASPBAE, ATD Fourth World, Baha'i International, E-Net Philippines, Save the Children Sweden, SEAMEO, SIL International, UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank. Education officers from the UNESCO offices in Bangkok, Almaty, Apia, Beijing, Dhaka, Kathmandu, New Delhi, Phnom Penh, Tashkent and Tehran participated as well as from UIS Montreal. UNICEF Education staff from the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), New Delhi, Phnom Penh and Yangon also participated.



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3. EFA Progress and Challenges

3.1 Overcoming Inequality

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The 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report – *Overcoming inequality: why governance matters* highlights how, despite strong progress, key targets of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals such as universal primary education, will not be achieved by 2015 on current trends. Countries and their development partners must increase the pace of change including education reform and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups to ensure that everyone in the region can receive the benefits of high quality education.

In particular governments must do more to address inequalities which affect the ability of different groups to access schooling and the quality of education provided by different schools. There are “persistent inequalities based on income, gender, location, ethnicity, language, disability and other markers of disadvantage”². Furthermore, progress towards EFA is hampered by stagnating aid to education and unfulfilled donor commitments. Increased financing must go hand-in-hand with targeted policies for unreached groups.

Global and national inequalities in education, between the world’s developed and developing countries, and between children from the richest households and those from the poorest in a country, affect enrolment and educational attainment as well as learning achievement. Inequalities widen progressively, as children progress through the education system.

The report sets out some key priorities to guide policy. Governments need to ‘get serious about equity’ by setting time-bound equity targets aimed at reducing disparities with ongoing monitoring and evaluation, as well as give higher priority to pro-poor spending and development of incentives to target the unreached. Governments need to act on their commitment to equity in financing education. Policy-makers need to reinforce the commitment to quality education, strengthen the links between education planning and poverty reduction, and recognize the limits to choice and competition in education. Finally, the donor community needs to deliver on aid commitments, close the aid financing gap and strengthen their commitment to equity in aid allocations.

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2 UNESCO. (2008) *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009: Overcoming inequality: why governance matters*. Paris: UNESCO and Oxford University Press. p. 1.

3.2 Progress towards EFA in the Asia-Pacific region

Presented below are some of the successes and remaining obstacles in reaching the unreached in parts of the Asia-Pacific region. This information has been compiled from the sub-regional synthesis EFA MDA reports developed for the Mekong, Insular South-East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia sub-regions.³ The *Pacific Education Development Framework* was used as reference for the section on the Pacific sub-region.

Across the Asia-Pacific region, there is general agreement that much more needs to be done to target the unreached in education, who include:

- Learners from remote and rural communities, including in isolated areas
- Learners from linguistic and ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, minority religious groups, etc.
- Girls and women, especially those who are pregnant or from rural and ethnic minority families
- Underperforming boys, boys at risk of dropping out, male dropouts
- Children from migrant families, refugees, stateless children
- Learners with disabilities and special needs
- Children in difficult circumstances (affected by armed conflict, disaster, children in prison or who are with their parent(s) in prison)
- Learners from very poor families (urban poor, poor families in remote areas)
- Child labourers, street children, trafficked children and abused children
- Children affected or infected by HIV and AIDS
- Orphans and abandoned children

3.2.1 South-East Asia

The Mekong sub-region EFA MDA report covers Viet Nam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar, whilst the Insular South-East Asia sub-region EFA MDA report covers the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia.

For the **Mekong sub-region**, children from remote communities, poor ethnic minority families, migrant families, as well as children with disabilities, street children, children in difficult circumstances and orphans and abandoned children have all been identified as part of the unreached population.

All Mekong countries have made gains in increasing coverage of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), but particular attention needs to be paid to ensuring that programmes are expanded to rural and remote areas. Despite gender equality, there remain significant social, ethnic, and regional disparities. In addition to coverage issues, challenges for the sub-region include improving the quality of ECCE, including addressing the lack of teachers.

Significant progress has been made towards universal primary education in the Mekong sub-region. Although primary education is technically free and compulsory, hidden costs such as opportunity costs for poorer families hinder progress towards EFA goal 2, universal primary education. Furthermore, children in remote areas lack access to schools or to complete schooling. School enrolment is still low among the disadvantaged population, including remote, ethnic minorities, poor and disabled children. High repetition rates at the primary level, and drop-out rates at the upper primary and lower secondary levels, also point to inefficiencies in the education system. Full-time study eludes many children due to their need to work to assist their families.

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³ Sub-regional synthesis EFA MDA reports have not been developed for the East Asia and West Asia sub-regions as internationally comparable national assessments have not been completed for these sub-regions. Please refer to <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/efa/mda/nationalreports> to view the EFA MDA reports for People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Overall literacy targets set for 2007 have been met, and it is likely that countries will achieve the 2015 literacy target. The trend towards gender parity for youth literacy is more positive than that for adults, which is progressing at a slower rate. However, obstacles remain. For example, in Lao PDR the low quality of primary schooling results in low levels of sustainable literacy. Where reading material is not available widely outside school, relapse into illiteracy is a real risk. Countries in the Mekong have initiated programmes aimed at life skills and lifelong learning to target youth and adult illiteracy, early school-leavers and out-of-school youth, and those seeking to acquire skills for income generation.

Under nearly all indicators there has been a movement towards greater gender parity. All countries in the sub-region have strategies and programmes in place to promote gender equality generally, as well as amongst disadvantaged groups specifically, such as school feeding programmes targeting girls and their families.

Quality improvement strategies and programmes specifically for disadvantaged children have been developed in all Mekong countries. For example, the Lao PDR has initiated a programme to develop a teacher education system to promote best practices in teaching and learning. However, obstacles remain in improving education quality. These include obstacles relating to regional disparity in resources, the assessment of learning outcomes, improving NFE provision, and the development of quality assurance systems.

The Insular sub-region is generally on track to attain the EFA goals by 2015. Specific policies, strategies and targeted programmes have been actively pursued to create a more favourable policy environment for previously unreached groups. Nevertheless, some groups still continue to encounter obstacles. They include: street children and working children; religious minorities, linguistic minorities, ethnic minorities, and indigenous people; people with disabilities and special needs; children from poor families or in difficult circumstances (e.g. living in places affected by armed conflict, disasters and calamities); and those living in remote areas.

Participation in ECCE programmes has increased across the sub-region, but levels remain low in Indonesia and the Philippines. Geographical inequity is also an issue, as reflected in an average gap of 70 percentage points between the highest and lowest province, state or region, which may be remote islands inhabited by different ethno-linguistic populations, who vary greatly in the extent of their assimilation into the mainstream "national" society and economy.

Despite progress towards universal primary education, significant numbers of out-of-school children remain. In 2005, 2 million primary-school aged children remained out of school in the Philippines, with 1.2 million in Indonesia and 125,000 in Malaysia. Improvements in national aggregate figures mask wide geographical disparities. Moreover, much more needs to be done to translate gains at the primary level to increased enrolment in secondary education.

Indonesia has made substantial gains in adult literacy, with the rate increasing from 81.5% in 1990 to 90.4% in 2004. Whilst Malaysia has also seen an improvement, the Philippines has seen a small drop despite having the highest adult literacy rate in the sub-region. The same trend can be seen in youth literacy levels.

Gender disparity issues vary across the region. For example, in Indonesia gender disparity in favour of boys exists in primary and secondary enrolment, but the opposite is the case in the Philippines. Gender disparity in favour of girls in the Philippines is also reflected in youth and adult literacy levels. The lower education outcomes for boys in most of the education outcome indicators need special attention. However, this should not result in complacency regarding the barriers that still confront girls in some areas, and which prevent them from fully benefiting from education services.

Education quality in the sub-region needs to be improved. Along with financing, parallel efforts to reach the unreached must address other target specific obstacles, such as language of instruction, appropriateness and relevancy of curriculum.

3.2.2 South Asia

The South Asia sub-region EFA MDA report covers Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. According to the report, great gains have been made towards the EFA goals, but countries need to renew their commitment and demonstrate this through earmarked allocation of sufficient resources to include specifically identified marginalized groups. South Asia remains a region characterized by significant education disparities related to unequal wealth, status and privileges, discrimination based on gender, social, ethnic and linguistic attributes, geographical location, physical and learning disabilities, and other difficult circumstances, which are deeply entrenched barriers to reaching the unreached groups.

Despite the expansion in coverage of ECCE, it is still limited to less than half of the age group in most countries. Moreover, ECCE services are more widely available for those in urban areas (except in urban slums) and for those households that can afford to pay.

Significant gains towards universal primary education have also been made in South Asia, but this has not led to increased secondary school enrolments in five of the seven countries, where less than half of secondary-school aged children are enrolled. Although governments are placing more focus on improving the quality of education, this has yet to translate into more effective, efficient and inclusive education systems. Significant enrolment disparities remain between geographical areas and across the urban-rural divide. Limited available data also suggest wide disparities amongst sub-groups based on ethnicity, language, disability, socio-economic status, and other factors. Children who face multiple disadvantages are the least likely to enroll and finish a full cycle of primary education. The 2005 EFA goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education was only achieved in three of the countries. Gender inequality remains an issue which requires more systematic and far-reaching reforms.

Youth literacy rates have also increased significantly, starting from a very low level, as the majority of youths are not in school. Adult literacy rates have also risen, but disparities exist across gender, geographic areas, and across the urban-rural divide. There is an unacceptably high gap between advantaged and disadvantaged sub-groups. More needs to be done to address the needs of illiterate adults, including greater political commitment and resource allocation.

Gender parity has improved across all indicators in the sub-region, but the lack of equality can be demonstrated by the comparatively low number of girls in higher levels of education and the lower level of adult literacy amongst women. Gender disparity is exacerbated in rural areas and in certain sub-groups of the population. Prejudice and discrimination need to be eradicated for the sub-region to achieve gender equality.

Education systems in South Asia need to be more effective, efficient and inclusive to decrease repetition rates, increase completion rates and improve learning outcomes. Poor education quality is adversely affecting those already disadvantaged and marginalized. The recruitment, development and retention of qualified teachers must be significantly improved in most of the countries in South Asia.

3.2.3 Central Asia

The Central Asia sub-region EFA MDA report covers Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

All four countries have developed measures to overcome the critical decline in ECCE during the 1990s. However, access to ECCE still remains limited for the majority of children, especially for children from poor families, children living in remote areas, ethnic minority groups and for children with disabilities. Participation levels remain well-below global averages. In 2005, the percentage of children of pre-primary age enrolled in ECCE ranged from 9.1% in Tajikistan to 35.6% in Kazakhstan.

Despite a strong legislative basis for free and compulsory basic education across the sub-region hidden costs create a barrier for children from poor and low-income families. Nevertheless, all countries have been able to sustain high levels of enrolment in basic education with almost a universal survival rate to Grade 4. Central Asian countries also have low levels of repetition by grade, which according to the Central Asia MDA Report is "explained by the fact in Central Asia countries, it is more preferred to transit students to the next grade and provide children who have learning difficulties with the opportunities to improve their results (additional lessons including during break time)."

Child labour, geographical remoteness and hidden costs of education remains a barrier to universal basic education.

Census data indicate a high level of literacy (around 99%) across the region. However, literacy levels of vulnerable groups remain unknown. Lifelong learning programmes have been piloted across all four countries. However, more needs to be done to drive political support for the expansion of NFE.

Challenges in the quality of education in the sub-region include text-book shortages (with only 60% to 80% of pupils provided with a full set of text books) and teacher shortages, particularly in the rural areas. Education financing in Central Asia remains low, at around 3% to 5% of GDP.

3.2.4 Pacific

The Pacific sub-region covers 14 countries, many of which are small island states and some consisting of scattered islands – the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Although much progress has been made in the Pacific region in expanding ECCE, enrolment rates are still less than 60% in several countries. Children from rural areas and poor families are under-represented.

Access to primary and secondary education is still limited, as many people live in remote and isolated areas. Most particularly, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have identified significant gaps in progress towards universal primary education. Closing these gaps, such as increasing the representation of girls, is a major priority in these countries. In most of the other Pacific countries, gender parity has almost been achieved in compulsory education, but more needs to be done to enable girls to continue onto upper-secondary education. Boys' underachievement in both primary and secondary levels has been identified as an issue across the region.

For the unreached groups, it is acknowledged that more needs to be done to address education disadvantage, for example, for children and youth in remote, rural and urban settlements. Children with disabilities, in particular, have been highlighted as a priority area to address in the *Pacific Education Development Framework*. It is estimated that less than 10% of children and youth with disabilities have access to any form of education. Furthermore, the framework draws attention to the growing incidence of poverty in the region, most seriously in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Kiribati. Widespread poverty will be a key challenge for Pacific education systems.

In the Pacific region, access to organized skills development programmes is inadequate relative to the number of school leavers, particularly for those in rural areas and the outer islands. The importance of technical and vocational education and training to the region has been emphasized, seen as crucial for creating the conditions for economic growth and meeting the needs of the youth population, which make up approximately 20% of the Pacific population. Another priority area is the expansion of literacy programmes for adults, particularly women and out-of-school youth.

The most critical input in improving the quality of education in the Pacific region is teacher quality. There is a shortage of qualified teachers in the region. Even among those that complete school, many are leaving without a functional level of literacy, numeracy and life skills.



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4. Policy Recommendations on Reaching the Unreached, Marginalized and Underserved in Education

4.1 Regional Policy Recommendations

Participants at the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators endorsed a set of regional policy recommendations on reaching the unreached. These recommendations are based on the sub-regional policy recommendations developed during the Mid-Term Policy Review Conferences in South-East, South and Central Asia, as well as those identified in the *Pacific Education Development Framework*. See Annex 5.

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The regional policy recommendations focus on six cross-cutting themes – inclusive education and gender and social equality, literacy and NFE, quality of education, monitoring and evaluation, financing and governance, and partnerships and coordination – and are linked to seven strategic objectives as set out below.

At the meeting country participants and representatives from EFA partners were split into groups. Each group was assigned a **strategic objective** and asked to recommend specific policies, strategies and concrete action areas to be carried out at the country, sub-regional and regional levels to ensure that each specific strategic objective is met. Set out below are their consolidated outputs, where each strategic objective is followed by specific **challenges and obstacles** hindering the achievement of the objective, followed by specific **policy recommendations** to achieve the objective and related **strategies and actions** to implement the policy

Strategic objective 1: Inclusion of children who are not in school and retention of children at risk of dropping out of school

Participants assigned to strategic objective 1 identified some challenges and obstacles hindering its achievement, which include:

- Limited availability of relevant data, which is necessary for a targeted response
- Inadequate levels of coordination between ministries and stakeholders, as well as within ministries

Strategic objectives for reaching the unreached, marginalized and underserved in education

Strategic objective 1: Inclusion of children who are not in school and retention of children at risk of dropping out of school

Strategic objective 2: Achieve gender and social equity and equality at all levels of education, from early childhood to adult education in both formal and non-formal sectors

Strategic objective 3: Attain basic and functional literacy for the unreached and underserved populations, with accessible and supported mother tongue language instruction for early childhood education and the early years of schooling, and in non-formal literacy programmes

Strategic objective 4: Achieve quality education for all, including the unreached and underserved populations, with an improved quality of teaching-learning process (teachers, learning materials, curriculum, etc.) and learning outcomes

Strategic objective 5: Institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA at the national, sub-regional and regional levels with active participation from all key partners (governments, INGOs, representatives of marginalized groups, civil society groups, UN agencies, and donors) in the process

Strategic objective 6: Ensure adequate investment in resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, including targeted support for the unreached and underserved populations, and the efficient and effective utilization of these resources

Strategic objective 7: Promote and institutionalize partnerships and technical and financial support for EFA, particularly targeting the unreached and underserved populations in the Asia and Pacific region

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- Absence of holistic, comprehensive, and targeted education plans
- Insufficient financial and human resources
- Inadequate budgetary provision specifically for disadvantaged children
- Lack of political will and commitment to increase and prioritize the education budget and implement free education, which includes addressing deficiencies in constitutional/legal frameworks for free education

In light of these obstacles, the group made three policy recommendations for meeting strategic objective 1, and suggested strategies and actions to be carried out.

Policy recommendation 1.1 – Strengthen policy towards children who are not in school and children who are at risk of dropping out of school

Strategy 1.1.A – Establish a comprehensive database to identify children who are not in school and who are at risk of dropping out of school. The recommended actions are:

- Develop locally-driven school mapping processes and strengthen aspects of existing data collection (e.g. introduce qualitative information)
- Conduct in-depth case studies to identify the reasons why children are excluded from schooling and learning
- Conduct household surveys to determine the barriers to accessing education
- Institutionalize existing data collection processes within a legal framework
- Build and/or strengthen the capacity of statisticians and other relevant officers

Strategy 1.1.B – Introduce an institutionalized coordination mechanism to coordinate among the various ministries, donors and civil society partners. The recommended actions are:

- Establish a working group focused on Inclusive Education in the Ministry of Education with participation by all relevant higher level officers of the ministries, departments and other agencies
- Form a technical working group that includes selected representatives from the above institutions to develop inclusive policies and actions

Policy recommendation 1.2 – Implement national policies and strategies to support and promote inclusive and child-centred education and promote active participation of unreachd and underserved groups

Strategy 1.2.C – Develop and implement a comprehensive national plan that covers all target groups, supports and promotes inclusive and child-centred education, and promotes active participation of unreachd and underserved groups. The recommended actions are:

- Undertake targeted capacity-building programs for national and local-level officers to develop skills in evidence-based and results-oriented planning, budgeting and management
- Develop a systematic monitoring and evaluation system which allows information sharing between agencies
- Involve other stakeholders in service delivery and monitoring at the local level to target the unreachd

Policy recommendation 1.3 – Remove all cost and legal barriers to accessing early childhood and basic education through: eliminating school fees and indirect costs; providing targeted financial support to the unreachd and underserved children; and reforming legislation so that all children (regardless of their status) have the right to unimpeded access to education

Strategy 1.3.D – Institute a constitutional/legal framework to provide free education and remove barriers to education

Strategy 1.3.E – Develop policies to enable the unreachd and underserved to complete early childhood and basic education, with the provision of adequate funding to support initiatives

The recommended actions are:

- Abolish all direct and indirect costs of education
- Abolish all legal forms of discrimination to accessing education, including passing complementary legislation to ensure other laws do not contradict this right (e.g. minimum age of marriage, minimum age of employment, etc.)
- Sign and ratify all relevant UN conventions
- Allocate sufficient, efficient and sustainable resources

Strategic objective 2: Achieve gender and social equity and equality at all levels of education, from early childhood to adult education in both formal and non-formal sectors

Participants identified the following obstacles to meeting strategic objective 2:

- Demand for girls to stay at home and help with housework
- Lack of relevance of school curriculum to family needs
- The lost opportunity that school attendance presents for children to earn money for their family

- Provision of dowries for girls encourages their early marriage
- Traditions whereby parents choose the course or profession for their children
- Greater likelihood of families to support education for boys than girls
- Gender stereotyping in school practice and policies

Five policy recommendations were proposed to assist countries in meeting strategic objective 2.

Policy recommendation 2.1 – Remove all cost and legal barriers to accessing early childhood and basic education through eliminating school fees and indirect costs, and providing targeted support to unreached and underserved children and adolescents

The recommended actions are:

- Provide cost-free education for disadvantaged groups, especially girls and women in slum areas, rural areas, villages, and underserved places
- Introduce innovative schemes like cost-sharing and cash transfer systems
- Promote models for the improved financial management of education (within the framework of transparency and accountability) to ensure that policies and resources have a direct impact at the school level. This will require a strong financial monitoring and evaluation system (including tracking when funds are sent and received, and how they are used)
- Increase resources for education of children at risk of dropping out with special consideration of resources for low-performing districts/villages (e.g. funds for appropriate teaching-learning materials, especially in mother tongue languages) and those with a high concentration of marginalized groups

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Policy recommendation 2.2 – Implement national policies and strategies that support and promote inclusive child-centred education, and promote active participation of unreached and underserved groups in decision-making and implementation

The recommended actions are:

- Increase participation of unreached and underserved groups in decision-making and implementation, especially women and girls from rural areas, slum areas, villages and underserved places
- Monitor child-friendly programmes regularly
- Hold different fora to ensure culturally-appropriate inputs from each group into national policies and strategies (e.g. workshops with different language groups, women) before sharing their inputs with broader groups

Policy recommendation 2.3 – Implement integrated strategies for gender equity in education and develop advocacy and communications strategies to address the need for changes in values, attitudes, etc., where appropriate

The recommended actions are:

- Provide distinct and culturally-appropriate platforms for women and girls to speak up
- Develop coherent and holistic national policy and planning frameworks to develop the ECCE sector. ECCE can give women more time for themselves and can also promote social equity, providing learning opportunities for underserved groups

Policy recommendation 2.4 – Expand policy attention to learners who are not in school and children at risk of dropping out with consideration to gender

The recommended actions are:

- Encourage adult education so that families will make sure that children continue to go to school
- Increase linkages between school and NFE programmes

Policy recommendation 2.5 – Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in the education system, including ensuring gender balance in teacher education, and research on the gender differences in educational achievement of boys and girls

The recommended actions are:

- Study innovative programmes aimed at retaining girls in school, such as the residential bridge programme for girls (e.g. in India) and the provision of cash transfers for families that are released when girls reach Grade 10
- Implement parents' education and community mobilization programmes that can help girls stay longer in school and prevent early marriages
- Provide leadership skills for girls and boys to encourage both sexes to take on leadership roles in later life

Policy recommendation 2.6 – Provide inclusive education training to teachers/facilitators and school staff so they have the capacity to respond to the diverse needs of all learners especially girls, and to school management committees and government officials to sensitize them to the issues of diversity and inclusive education and how to apply inclusive principles in policy-making, planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation

The recommended actions are:

- Integrate gender perspectives in pre- and in-service training for teachers, school staff, Ministry of Education officials, etc.
- Prepare a gender-responsive school budget from the ministry to school level
- Include gender responsiveness elements in policy-making, planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation at the ministry level

Strategic objective 3: Attain basic and functional literacy for the unreached and underserved populations, with accessible and supported mother tongue language instruction for early childhood education and the early years of schooling, and in non-formal literacy programmes

Participants stressed the importance of expanding strategic objective 3 to cover life skills and literacy skills for youth and adults. They identified the following challenges and obstacles to attaining the objective:

- Limited data to identify the unreached population, their learning needs and their literacy levels
- Lack of a systematic literacy assessment system and proper literacy database
- Insufficient funding allocation for literacy and life skills programmes
- Reaching the unreached in conflict-affected, post-conflict and natural disaster areas, as well as internally-displaced persons
- Social and legal acceptability of literacy learners

- Insufficient qualified teachers and low incentives to attract and retain teachers
- Lack of community preparedness
- Inadequate teaching-learning materials in local languages and scripts
- Lack of literate environments

The group proposed five policy recommendations for strategic objective 3, and suggested strategies and actions to be carried out.

Policy recommendation 3.1 – Expand scope of literacy and lifelong learning for youth and adults

Strategy 3.1.A – Review the concept of literacy with a focus on learning achievement, and widen the scope of literacy for youth and adults in the lifelong learning perspectives. The recommended actions are:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies, strategies and programmes/activities (concept and definition). Take stock of unreached people to reach the unreached and extend the scope of literacy from the perspective of lifelong learning
- Revise/develop policy, strategies, and literacy programmes to suit the learning needs of unreached people
- Develop and implement systematic literacy assessments (indicators, tools and assessment method) for children, youth and adults

Policy recommendation 3.2 – Develop appropriate and adequate resources relevant to the local context – teachers’ capacity development

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Strategy 3.2.B – Provide adequate resources and training for teachers and facilitators to support the delivery of literacy programmes relevant to the local context. The recommended actions are:

- Develop and/or adapt curriculum so it is relevant to language and learning needs
- Orient teachers/facilitators to the specific learning needs of the target population
- Encourage communities to participate in developing culturally appropriate local curricula and teaching-learning materials
- Revise teacher training so it addresses specific local needs and ensures teachers can function effectively in local contexts

Policy recommendation 3.3 – Develop literate environments to support literacy practices

Strategy 3.3.C – Develop the environment to support literacy practices in classrooms, libraries, community learning centres (CLCs) and the home. The recommended actions are:

- Allocate adequate resources to support activities to create literate environments
- Encourage various stakeholders, including communities, to contribute to the implementation of learning activities, including the operation of CLCs
- Promote advocacy and social mobilization among stakeholders to support activities leading to literate environments (media, library, etc.)

Policy recommendation 3.4 – Create synergy between the formal and NFE system (to continue education that meets diverse learning needs)

- **Strategy 3.4.D** – Create synergy between the formal and NFE system for youth and adults for continuing education that meets diverse learning needs. The recommended actions are:

- Introduce an equivalency framework with programmes that are flexible in areas of teaching-learning processes, attendance requirements, delivery and assessment
- Expand Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and NFE to address the needs of youth who dropped out from formal education
- Develop regional and national qualifications frameworks

Policy recommendation 3.5 – Develop and implement comprehensive policy on mother tongue-based multilingual literacy programmes (with appropriate financial allocation)

Strategy 3.5.E – Develop/implement policy and comprehensive strategies for mother tongue-based multilingual literacy programmes (with appropriate financial allocation). The recommended actions are:

- Raise the awareness of governments and communities on the benefits of mother tongue-based literacy programmes
- Allocate adequate resources to promote mother tongue-based literacy programmes
- Facilitate communities to create culturally appropriate writing systems

Strategic objective 4: Achieve quality education for all, including the unreached and underserved populations, with an improved quality of teaching-learning process (teachers, learning materials, curriculum, etc.) and learning outcomes

In meeting strategic objective 4, the challenges and obstacles identified by participants include:

- Difficulties diversity (e.g. linguistic diversity) presents for: formulating a comprehensive education or teacher education ‘package’ to address regional disparities; identifying the unique needs of the disadvantaged population and incorporating their needs into the teacher-training curricula; and making the assessment system flexible enough to be relevant to the learning needs of specific populations (e.g. the skills need in different geographic areas, the age of learners), marginalized groups, and learner needs over time
- Need for an enabling environment for innovation, which includes a culture of support, motivation and collaboration, sufficient resources (e.g. technical, financial) and which allows teachers to balance the requirements of national norms and standards with flexibility
- Lack of vision and definition for quality education
- Limited expertise and support for teachers to: adapt content and create locally relevant content and teaching-learning materials; translate the curriculum into learning and resource materials (e.g. integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT)); and teach content related to sustainable development (e.g. HIV/AIDS, gender)
- Content sensitivity (e.g. on HIV/AIDS, gender), cultural/social taboos and diversity
- Lack of comprehensive national policy for quality education and teacher education that focuses on teaching the unreached and disadvantaged groups, that:
 - Includes policies to attract and retain motivated and quality teachers
 - Recognizes the inclusiveness of teacher education
 - Given the unique learning needs of marginalized/disadvantaged groups, considers flexibility of norms and standards for professional competence
 - Promotes professional development of skills for reaching the unreached and underserved
 - Meets local needs for hiring qualified teachers

Group members proposed five policy recommendations for meeting strategic objective 4, and associated strategies and recommended actions for their implementation.

Policy recommendation 4.1 – Implement comprehensive national policies for teacher/facilitator education which set the norms and standards for teacher/facilitator competencies, and provides ongoing professional development

Strategy 4.1.A – Develop a national framework (or enhance existing policy) for pre-service and in-service teacher education development that takes into account teaching norms, standards and required qualifications for reaching unreached and disadvantaged groups. Frameworks/policies should also include definitions for quality education and teacher education, and incentives for attracting and retaining teachers. Specific recommended actions are:

- Consult stakeholders at different levels on the framework needs and content – teachers/school heads, educational administrations, teaching institutions, civil society, educational experts, and government ministries
- Develop a draft national framework for teacher education development and seek the opinion of stakeholders on it, taking into account the legal and financial implications, as well as the validation and integration of the framework into existing frameworks and policies
- Finalize and institutionalize the framework
- Mobilize financial support for quality teacher education with special concern for the unreached
- Implement the framework for improving quality standards for teachers and learning achievement by building the capacity of teachers and administrators, and undertaking advocacy and raising awareness, specifically with teacher institutions, policy-makers, civil society, labour organizations, etc.

Policy recommendation 4.2 – Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of curriculum implementation and develop sustainable content for course materials in school and TVET curricula

Strategy 4.2.B – Develop a curriculum framework for reaching the unreached and the needs of learners from different social and economic backgrounds. The recommended actions are:

- Consult stakeholders – representatives of the educationally marginalized groups, teachers/school heads, educational administrations, teacher institutions, civil society, educational experts, and government ministries – to assist with content
- Conduct a mapping exercise – take stock of existing efforts and ‘good practices’ on the development/implementation of curricula for disadvantaged groups (e.g. Who is doing what? What has already been learnt from other actors and countries to meet various needs?)
- Prepare a curriculum that includes strategies for addressing specific disparities and reaching specific marginalized groups based on lessons learnt from the mapping
- Prepare learning and resource materials, including the use of ICTs and activities
- Translate teaching-learning material into regional languages to cater to linguistic diversity
- Build capacity and train administrators and teachers
- Monitor and obtain feedback to evaluate and enhance the framework

Policy recommendation 4.3 – Integrate learner-centred processes and teacher training on HIV/AIDS prevention and the concept of ‘life skills education’ linked to national priorities for sustainable development and lifelong learning into the curriculum

The recommended actions are:

- Map and take stock of existing practices and resources in this area

- Conduct research on processes for content integration (e.g. How much time is needed, what steps, who needs to be involved) at specific levels and for specific content
- Intensify awareness about the role of civil society and government and generate a greater degree of acceptability for integrating such content
- Obtain inter-ministerial coordination and consultation on curriculum content
- Develop learning resources where needed (see 4.4 below)
- Carry out capacity-building and training based on lessons learned during mapping activities and research
- Encourage community involvement and participation

Policy recommendation 4.4 – Develop good quality teaching and learning resources and facilities, including the use of ICTs in teaching-learning processes, teacher training and distance learning, etc.

The recommended actions are:

- Map and take stock of pedagogical practices for specific materials (e.g. ICTs), locally relevant materials/resources (including human resources), and existing teaching and learning materials
- Conduct research on processes for developing locally relevant materials/resources, pedagogical practices for using materials (e.g. ICTs), and processes for encouraging teachers to use materials
- Lobby for and generate additional financial resources for learning materials
- Enhance infrastructure to: support the use of quality learning materials including developing general standards for ‘quality learning materials’ and decentralized institutions (e.g. resource centres) to make resource materials available; provide teaching-learning support; and encourage communication and learning amongst resource centres
- Encourage ongoing support for quality teaching and learning resources materials at several levels
- Promote the use of innovative materials
- Synergize with mutually enhancing combination of hardware, software and technical support
- Involve students by encouraging dialogue between teachers and students on ICTs and enabling students to develop and use their own materials more effectively
- Establish a learning resource development and management information system that can serve as an open public-access database of all teaching-learning materials available in the country

Policy recommendation 4.5 – Develop assessment frameworks and institute regular monitoring of learning achievements that recognizes a variety of ways for measuring success

The recommended actions are:

- Conduct action research to identify learner profile databases in other countries and how they are used
- Design an assessment framework that specifically caters to the unreached groups and also addresses qualitative aspects of assessing learning: information on learning achievement; information on the school/learning environment; information on learner profiles (Education Management Information System or EMIS), including the home environment, nutrition and health; child literacy and learning levels in the early years. The framework should serve as periodic monitoring of achievement levels, supported by and involving parent participation

- Incorporate a process of regularly evaluating students into pre-service teacher training
- Conduct in-service training and capacity-building of administrators/teachers on the assessment framework
- Ensure the assessment framework allows for feedback on policies, strategies, classroom transitions, and learning

Strategic objective 5: Institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA at the national, sub-regional and regional levels with active participation from all key partners (governments, INGOs, representatives of marginalized groups, civil society groups, UN agencies, and donors) in the process

The group discussed the challenges and obstacles present for attaining strategic objective 5 which include:

- Lack of political commitment and absence of a strong culture of evidence-based decision-making
- Insufficient technical support for monitoring and evaluation from external (e.g. UNESCO) and internal stakeholders
- Inadequate financial and human resources
- Difficulty of obtaining quality and timely data

Participants identified three policy recommendations for meeting strategic objective 5, and recommended strategies and actions for their implementation.

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Policy recommendation 5.1 – Institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA at the sub-national and national levels, and sub-regional and regional levels with adequate and effective human resource support and active participation from key partners (governments, INGOs, representatives of marginalized groups, civil society groups, UN agencies, and donors)

Strategy 5.1.A – Establish/strengthen the mechanism for effective monitoring and evaluation of EFA at the country level (from national and sub-national level) with adequate human and financial resources and an effective support team

Strategy 5.1.B – Strengthen cooperation between national and sub-national agencies for statistics and the ministries of education regarding school records standardization, data collection, compilation, and analysis with a view to achieving coherence in educational statistics for national and international use including reporting to the UIS

Strategy 5.1.C – Develop a comprehensive database from different sources for monitoring, dissemination and advocacy purposes and integrate the results in evidence-based decision making

Strategy 5.1.D – Conduct in-depth EFA assessment every five years

Strategy 5.1.E – Identify and enumerate out-of-school children

Strategy 5.1.F – Measure and record classroom based interaction

Policy recommendation 5.2 – *Develop national capacity in nationally standardized and mutually compatible school records, statistical data collection and analysis for more effective monitoring and evaluation of EFA that provides comprehensive information about the unreached and underserved population and promotes the use of disaggregated data in policy-making, planning, programming, evaluation and budgeting*

Strategy 5.2.G – Develop national capacity in statistical data collection and analysis for evidence-based decision-making and monitoring and evaluation of EFA

Strategy 5.2.H – Develop the capacity that provides comprehensive information about the unreached and underserved population and promotes the collection and use of disaggregated data

Policy recommendation 5.3 – *Establish a regional capacity-building programme to support the monitoring of EFA at the national level*

Strategy 5.3.I – Use the education forum as a platform for EFA goal monitoring and capacity development in member states

Strategy 5.3.J – Establish regional capacity-building programmes to support the monitoring of EFA at the national level. Form a regional body to manage and coordinate the regional capacity-building programme and facilitate information and resource sharing. The recommended actions are:

- With advice and input from countries and EFA partners, prepare a concept paper on developing a regional capacity-building programme
- Build consensus among countries on the regional capacity-building programme
- Countries and EFA partners to identify and prioritize the areas and activities needed for the regional capacity-building programme, and prepare a work plan
- Mobilize resources to implement the regional capacity-building programme
- Establish a regional EFA body composed of country representatives to provide guidance, direction and to monitor the capacity-building programme

The participants also suggest that the following strategies be used to promote the use of evidence-based decision-making for policy formulation by governments:

- Promote partnership in evidence-based decision-making among the different organizations working on statistics (e.g. Asian Development Bank, World Bank)
- Participate in international conferences to help raise the importance of data, especially disaggregated data
- Participate in international assessment programmes, e.g. Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Strategic objective 6: Ensure adequate investment in resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, including targeted support for the unreached and underserved populations, and the efficient and effective utilization of these resources

Participants identified the following obstacles and challenges to meeting strategic objective 6:

- Insufficient financial resources to ensure equitable funding for good quality education for all
- Inadequate data to support policy agreements, planning, programming, and budgeting which obstructs the selection of the best strategies and actions

- Difficulties in maintaining continuous financial commitments towards assisting vulnerable groups (e.g. deployment of teachers to remote rural areas)
- Lack of financial resources to meet system-wide requirements for human resource and infrastructure development

The group proposed two policy recommendations, with associated strategies and actions.

Policy recommendation 6.1 – Ensure adequate investment of resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, particularly targeting the unreached and underserved populations, and ensure efficient and effective utilization of these resources

Strategy 6.1.A – Establish a legal/policy framework to ensure an effective/efficient allocation of financial resources to the unreached and underserved groups. The recommended actions are:

- Map the unreached and underserved groups and their educational needs to ensure a proper estimation of resource requirements
- Review similar existing policy frameworks and share experiences
- Adopt inclusive and gender lens for allocations
- Identify specific fiscal measures that can be adopted to raise funds
- Formulate policy frameworks which best meet national requirements pertaining to the unreached and underserved groups

Strategy 6.1.B – Ensure the allocation and mobilization of adequate financial resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, especially targeted support for the unreached and underserved populations. The recommended actions are:

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- Map the unreached and underserved to facilitate the proper allocation of resources
- Ensure adequate budgets for ECCE, NFE, adult education, children with special educational needs, emergency education, alternative learning systems, and the poorest children
- Provide targeted financial support to disadvantaged children, youth and adults
- Ensure accessibility of education services and facilities, especially for the unreached, at-risk, and other disadvantaged children, youth and adults (e.g. girls and ethnic minority/ethno-linguistic minority groups)
- Develop differential resourcing arrangements, including school grants formulae, for the most socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (e.g. migrant workers' children)
- Increase budget allocations to a minimum of 6% of GDP for education
- Abolish fees and provide subsidies (e.g. through conditional cash transfers, school feeding programmes, scholarships, etc.) to ensure access to basic education for learners from poor families

Strategy 6.1.C – Promote timely provision and efficient and effective use of financial resources. The recommended actions are:

- Governments to develop recommendations on how to simplify fund release processes
- Conduct regional exercises to review allocations and expenditures of education finances
- Strengthen financial monitoring systems and adopt more transparent mechanisms for using financial resources
- Undertake studies to evaluate cost-effectiveness and assess the impact of past investments on educational performance and outcomes of unreached and underserved groups

Policy recommendation 6.2 – Strengthen governance and accountability systems to ensure efficient and effective service delivery for the unreached and underserved

Strategy 6.2.D – Develop governance strategy to devolve management decision-making to lower levels (to the district levels, etc.) and strengthen accountability systems. The recommended actions are:

- Develop conceptual frameworks and obtain policy consensus on the devolution of management decision-making powers to lower tiers of education systems
- Research the status of accountability systems and introduce measures to address the issues identified
- Streamline governance structures, delineate roles and responsibilities, and streamline recruitment and deployment
- Put in place automated logistical, finance and accounting systems
- Strengthen school-based decision-making and mobilize communities/villages to contribute to decision-making

Strategy 6.2.E – Build capacity of education systems and strengthen their middle tiers, such as district levels. The recommended actions are:

- Build capacity in fiscal management
- Build capacity in policy analysis and formulation, results-based management, planning, budgeting and monitoring
- Promote a multi-stakeholder approach
- Build capacity in research related to education investment, management, assessment of educational achievement, financial tracking, etc. within the region

Strategy 6.2.F – Promote decentralization so there is greater active participation of marginalized groups in decision-making and implementation to meet educational needs and create a child-centred teaching and learning environment. The recommended actions are:

- Form consultation and advocacy processes
- Establish a Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (monitoring and evaluation)
- Introduce resource allocation and management restructuring for a child-based approach to decentralization
- Create a child-centred teaching and learning environment where children are protected as rights holders and parents/schools as duty holders

Strategy 6.2.G – Promote effective coordination and consultation with stakeholders to ensure good governance and accountability systems which works towards timely delivery of services. The recommended actions are:

- Establish an active coordination mechanism ensuring participation of all stakeholders
- Develop transparent and accountable division of individual and shared responsibilities of each stakeholder/group (memoranda of understanding)
- Conduct research/impact evaluations to review the accountability systems as well as stakeholders' contributions
- Provide necessary feedback on the system

Strategic objective 7: Promote and institutionalize partnerships and technical and financial support for EFA, particularly targeting the unreached and underserved populations in the Asia and Pacific region

The participants identified the following policy recommendation and actions to assist countries in attaining strategic objective 7.

Policy recommendation 7.1 – Expand and strengthen cooperation, coordination and joint actions to promote dialogue and information exchange and to maintain the EFA profile

The recommended actions are:

- Expand and strengthen existing coordination and collaboration mechanisms to coordinate and harmonize resources and activities of all key partners, with the Ministry of Education taking the leading role
- Hold high-level meetings with education ministers, education secretaries and EFA coordinators both at the Asia-Pacific regional and sub-regional levels to maintain political commitment to EFA, with particular attention to the unreached and underserved populations
- Establish exchange programmes among countries to focus on, and for possible scale-up of good practices on reaching the unreached and underserved populations
- Increase public and media awareness of EFA, focusing on unreached and underserved populations

4.2 Sub-Regional Policy Recommendations

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At the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators participants were grouped into **sub-regions** for East and South-East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and the Pacific to formulate policy recommendations, strategies and concrete activities to be carried out in each sub-region to reach unreached groups in education and ensure the EFA goals are met by 2015. Due to the vast diversity between the sub-regions of Asia and the Pacific, any joint and coordinated action on a regional scale would lose the focus and momentum necessary for a cohesive action. This meeting therefore provided a forum for policymakers and EFA Coordinators from different sub-regions to formulate their sub-regional priorities, strategies and actions with the view to assimilate them into their sub-regional political organization's development programme.

The sub-regional working groups conducted their group discussions differently. This was partly due to whether or not the sub-region had already jointly formulated its sub-regional action plan (as the South-East Asia countries had within SEAMEO); and also whether the EFA Coordinator was present at the 10th Regional Meeting. Consequently, group reports differed in structure and style. Nevertheless, most of the sub-regional proposed action addressed the common theme of "reaching the unreached", except West Asia which had not yet conducted a joint policy review.

4.2.1 East and South-East Asia

Ten SEAMEO projects have been endorsed by the Ministers of Education for South-East Asia for its member countries to work collaboratively on reaching the unreached. The 10 SEAMEO projects are:

- **Project 1** – Transition support programme for learners with disabilities: to assist learners with special educational needs to adapt to change at school and in the world of work
- **Project 2** – Tracking system for students at risk of dropping out: a school-based computerized system that can monitor, evaluate and initiate interventions on students who have the tendency of dropping out from public schools

- **Project 3** – A conference to promote awareness of education for girls and women: to enable SEAMEO member countries to develop action plans and collaborate in the future
- **Project 4** – Tracking mechanisms for unreached populations: sharing of technical expertise and experiences to mobilize different stakeholders and coordinate plans and resources
- **Project 5** – Pre-school programme for all: a six-year project to assist the SEAMEO member countries to establish a mechanism to provide all five-year-old children with pre-school education as a foundation of lifelong learning, prepare them for formal schooling and reduce early drop-outs to attain the goal of universal primary education
- **Project 6** – Multigrade teaching: teaching and learning on multigrade teaching subject
- **Project 7** – Development of community-based learning centres in rural areas in South-East Asia for literacy and livelihood: to serve as the venue to provide vocational education for the poor families in rural, remote and isolated areas that have no access to formal education, with a focus on supporting lifelong learning, communal solidarity, capacity-building and income generation. The project is to be sustained by the local community.
- **Project 8** – Introduction of an inter-country schooling programme for stateless and undocumented children
- **Project 9** – Development of an integrated approach to HIV and AIDS in education: focusing on strengthening existing government policies on addressing HIV/AIDS
- **Project 10** – Education in emergencies and disaster preparedness: a collaborative effort by and between the government and civil society to provide and/or seek out post-crisis support (educational and psychosocial) to children and youth affected by disasters, including teaching emergency preparedness in the learning environment

Each project has a lead country responsible for preparing a concept note/proposal, which includes seeking funding and establishing mechanisms for project development, implementation and management. Lead countries will work together with the SEAMEO and ASEAN Secretariats, and identified EFA partners during the development and implementation phases. Participating countries and supporting EFA partners have also been identified. See Annex 2 for further details on the SEAMEO project proposals.

The East Asia and South-East Asia participant group agreed during the meeting that it is important to build on the template that is already available, keep the SEAMEO framework as a basis, and co-ordinate the projects with further initiatives under the aegis of UNESCO and other EFA partners. Participants from East Asia contributed their thoughts on the 10 SEAMEO projects and identified areas in which there could be joint collaboration. Additional participating countries from the sub-region were identified at the meeting. Specifically:

- Project 1 – Mongolia and Thailand
- Project 3 – Thailand and Myanmar
- Project 4 – Mongolia
- Project 5 – People's Republic of China and Mongolia
- Project 6 – Myanmar
- Project 9 – Mongolia
- Project 10 – Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mongolia

The group also identified additional steps to be taken to complement the 10 SEAMEO projects and meet the needs of the sub-regions:

- Improve governance:
 - Hold a forum on official development assistance of education to support the implementation of the SEAMEO projects
 - Build inter-governmental capacity for countries to ensure the effective decentralization of programmes
- Strengthen coordination:
 - Expand existing coordination systems of all key partners
 - Hold high-level meetings to coordinate these activities
 - Include donors to initiate discussion on financing
- Promote information sharing:
 - Establish exchange programmes (e.g. study visits, online collaboration, etc.) to share information and best practices for reaching the unreached
 - Engage the media to raise awareness of issues associated with reaching the unreached in education
- Provide classroom support:
 - Provide teacher aides in the classroom to support children with disabilities and those with other needs to help teachers meet individual learning needs
- Expand content:
 - Introduce long-term sustainability concepts into the education curriculum, including an emphasis on poverty reduction and gender
- Strengthen equivalency programmes:
 - Promote learning through alternative learning systems, e.g. NFE provision at all levels

Acknowledging the difficulties in financing the 10 SEAMEO projects and complementary projects in light of the global financial crisis, the group proposed the following financing strategies:

- Explore funding opportunities with other education partners
- Establish a mechanism that would push donor countries to fulfil their collective commitments to achieve EFA goals
- Map, take stock of and optimize existing resources
- Explore the most cost-efficient modalities of implementing projects with effective quality, e.g. tapping into the knowledge and resources of international agencies, like UNESCO and SEAMEO, to identify cost-effective modalities for implementing projects
- Take advantage of the financial crisis to explore new modalities with innovative technology (e.g. Skype) to deliver training programmes to reach the unreached in a cost-effective manner

4.2.2 South and West Asia

Group members focused on the seven strategic objectives for reaching the unreached, marginalized and underserved in education and developed policy recommendations, strategies and concrete actions for achieving the objectives in their sub-regions.

The group also recommended that the *2nd South Asian Education Ministerial Meeting* to be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in December 2009, adopt the theme of “reaching the unreached”, following

South-East Asia's adoption of the theme with the support of SEAMEO, UNESCO, ASEAN and other EFA partners. The *1st South Asian Education Ministerial Meeting* was held in Pakistan in 2003 to discuss the financing of EFA and gender issues.

Strategic objective 1: Inclusion of children who are not in school and retention of children at risk of dropping out of school

Policy recommendation 1.1 – Formulate or reformulate policies for reaching the unreached and those who are at risk of dropping out of school

Strategy 1.1.A – Identify target groups for the policies

Strategy 1.1.B – Improve statistical databases, including ensuring proper disaggregation of data by sex, etc.

Strategy 1.1.C – Increase budget for policy formulation

The recommended actions are:

- Strengthen existing data collection processes, including through institutionalizing existing data collection and obtaining UIS assistance to improve data collection
- Conduct locally-driven school mapping processes

Strategic objective 2: Achieve gender and social equity and equality at all levels of education, from early childhood to adult education in both formal and non-formal sectors

Policy recommendation 2.1 – Adopt a targeted approach and provision for giving priority to girls and women that are most disadvantaged and face multiple exclusionary factors

Policy recommendation 2.2 – Review education provision from a gender perspective

Policy recommendation 2.3 – Ensure policy, planning and monitoring systems are inclusive

Policy recommendation 2.4 – Develop policy on incentives for teachers

Strategy 2.1.D – Support equity for girls and women so that girls stay and complete education

Strategy 2.1.E – Implement gender-responsive budgeting

Strategy 2.1.F – Strengthen databases on ECCE and NFE

The recommended actions are:

- Provide teachers' allowance to recruit and retain qualified teachers to serve in hardship communities and remote areas
- Produce a more gender-sensitive curriculum
- Establish residential schools for girls
- Provide incentive grants and scholarships for inclusion of girls of educationally marginalized groups
- Integrate a gender perspective in pre- and in-service training of teachers and administrative staff

Strategic objective 3: Attain basic and functional literacy among the unreached and underserved populations, with accessible and supported mother tongue language instruction for early childhood education and the early years of schooling, and in non-formal literacy programmes

Policy recommendation 3.1 – Make a specific budget allocation for NFE in the total education budget

Policy recommendation 3.2 – Develop a comprehensive policy on literacy and life-skills education from a life-long learning perspective for adults and youth living in rural/remote/inaccessible areas covering marginalized communities

Policy recommendation 3.3 – Develop a national youth policy with four thrust areas – youth empowerment, gender justice, inter-sectoral approach and information and research network

Strategy 3.1.G – Provide adequate human and capital resources to support literacy programmes

Strategy 3.1.H – Create supportive environments for literacy practices in the community using media, library, etc.

Strategy 3.1.I – Establish equivalency programmes creating synergies between non-formal and formal education systems

Strategy 3.1.J – Develop and implement policies and comprehensive strategies on mother tongue-based multilingual literacy programmes

The recommended actions are:

- Establish open/continuing schooling which fosters equivalency
- Conduct more actions within the framework of LIFE and UNLD
- Review existing literacy policies with a focus on learning achievement, and widen the scope of literacy for youth and adults
- Allocate and deploy capital and human resources to support literacy programmes

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Strategic objective 4: Achieve quality education for all, including the unreached and underserved populations, with improved quality of teaching-learning process (teachers, learning materials, curriculum, etc.) and learning outcomes

Policy recommendation 4.1 – Develop and/or implement comprehensive national policies on teacher/facilitator education which sets the norms and standards for teacher/facilitator competencies, and provide ongoing professional development

Policy recommendation 4.2 – Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of curriculum implementation and develop sustainable content for course materials in school and TVET curricula

Policy recommendation 4.3 – Formulate policies for teacher-friendly environments to recruit and retain qualified teachers to serve in hardship communities and remote areas

Policy recommendation 4.4 – Develop indicators to measure learning impact and outcomes

Policy recommendation 4.5 – Include disadvantaged learners in international standard assessment tests

Strategy 4.1.K – Develop a comprehensive teacher education policy focusing on inclusion, which requires having national level norms and standards which allow flexibility to address the specific needs of teaching different categories of learners

Strategy 4.1.L – Reprioritize the existing strategies

Strategy 4.1.M – Reallocate finance

Strategy 4.1.N – Develop the national curriculum framework

Strategy 4.1.O – Integrate life skills into education

The recommended actions are:

- Adapt policy based on local needs of the learners
- Prepare national curriculum frameworks
- Improve the curriculum to include sustainable content

Strategic objective 5: Institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA at the national, sub-regional and regional levels with active participation from all key partners (representatives of marginalized groups, governments, INGOs, civil society groups, UN agencies, and donors) in the process

Policy recommendation 5.1 – Ensure greater focus on creating an environment for evidence-based decision-making processes

Policy recommendation 5.2 – Institutionalize active participation of key partners

Strategy 5.1.P – Establish and strengthen mechanisms for effective monitoring and evaluation with effective human resources allocation

Strategy 5.1.Q – Strengthen cooperation between national and sub-national agencies to achieve coherence in education statistics for national and international use

Strategy 5.1.R – Build capacity of all stakeholders

Strategy 5.1.S – Investigate ways to integrate quality into monitoring and evaluation

The recommended actions are:

- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation, and management information systems
- Conduct school mapping exercises
- Collect, compile, analyze and disseminate education data, and adopt evidence-based decision-making processes
- Undertake capacity-building of key stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation
- Conduct periodic surveys

Strategic objective 6: Ensure adequate investment in resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, including targeted support for the unreached and underserved population, and the efficient and effective utilization of these resources

Policy recommendation 6.1 – Strengthen governance

Policy recommendation 6.2 – Ensure accountability of the governments to commit/allocate at least 6% of GNP to education

Policy recommendation 6.3 – Ensure the financial focus of national education policy

Policy recommendation 6.4 – Introduce an education tax for elementary education and higher education (e.g. in India)

Policy recommendation 6.5 – Implement flexible funding availability to foster inclusion

Strategy 6.1.T – Enable flexible financing availability

Strategy 6.1.U – Establish legal and policy interventions

Strategy 6.1.V – Adopt child budgeting

Strategy 6.1.W – Expand the education budget beyond the Ministry of Education to other relevant ministries and EFA partners

Strategy 6.1.X – Require governments to put in place accountability systems

The recommended actions are:

- Avoid the overlapping of education programmes to promote the effective and efficient use of resources
- Obtain a report from the government on national accounting systems
- Ensure allocated amounts reach the intended beneficiaries
- Implement legislation on child rights

Strategic objective 7: Promote and institutionalize partnerships and technical and financial support for EFA, particularly targeting the unreached and underserved populations in the Asia and Pacific region

Policy recommendation 7.1 – *Include collaboration with other agencies, parents, communities, and parent-teacher associations*

The recommended action is:

- Initiate innovative practices (e.g. Solution Exchange programme of UNDP in India)

4.2.3 Central Asia

The Central Asia sub-region was represented by the UNESCO Education Officers from the Almaty and Tashkent Offices, who will share with country representatives in Central Asia the results of this meeting. The points below are based on previous meetings and workshops in Central Asia, with the country-level proposed actions from the *Central Asia EFA Coordinators Meeting* held in December 2008.

The following needs and problems have been identified at sub-regional workshops:

- Lack of clear vision of the inclusive education concept and priorities linked to vulnerable groups
- The education system not being conducive to implementation of a multidisciplinary inclusive education approach
- Need for assistance to develop national indicator frameworks to guide country programming, monitoring and evaluation of achievements
- Need for building the capacity of stakeholders in data collection, analysis and reporting mechanisms (consolidate, maintain, distribute)
- Lack of integration of indicators for inclusive education monitoring and evaluation into national statistical frameworks
- Lack of national mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and disseminate good practices
- Need for strategies for improving interdepartmental cooperation (coordinated efforts of ministries of education, health care, social protection, finance)

The country-level proposed actions to respond to the challenges of inclusive education are as follows:

Kazakhstan

- Involve and train media to raise awareness on inclusive education needs
- Provide inclusive education training to NGOs and communities in remote areas (UNESCO, UNICEF, Ministry of Education, NGOs)
- Build the capacity of decision-makers in results-based planning, management and budgeting for inclusion (UNESCO)
- Implement teacher training programmes for professional development (Ministry of Education, National Teacher Training Institute)

Kyrgyzstan

- Conduct a survey on the impact of the economic crisis on social services, with a focus on vulnerable groups (Ministry of Education, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank)
- Provide training on CLCs to involve communities and parents in inclusive education initiatives at the local level (NGOs, Ministry of Education, UNESCO)
- Review national legislation as applied to the inclusive education concept
- Use the toolkit on “Equity and Inclusion in Education” to support education sector planning (UNICEF, UNESCO, Ministry of Education)
- Build the capacity of decision-makers in results-based planning, management and budgeting for inclusion (UNESCO)

Tajikistan

- Develop inclusive education policy as applied to different levels of education (UNESCO, UNICEF, Ministry of Education)
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess impact on disadvantaged groups (UN agencies, Ministry of Education, World Bank)
- Develop teaching-learning materials and teacher training (Ministry of Education, National Teacher Training Institute, UNESCO, UNICEF)

Uzbekistan

- Build national capacities of policy-makers and teachers in education policy planning with a focus on inclusion (Ministry of Education, UNESCO, UNICEF, Republican Centre for the Social Adaptation of Children)
- Revise teaching programmes and curricula (UNESCO, UNDP, Ministry of Education)
- Enhance quality education through providing access, e.g. to ICTs, ECCE services for disadvantaged groups in remote areas (Ministry of Higher and Special Education, Ministry of Public Education, UNICEF, UNESCO)

4.2.4 West Asia

The UNESCO Education Officer from the Tehran Cluster Office also noted additional focus areas for **Afghanistan, Iran** and **Turkmenistan**, although these activities are not directly linked to the MDA theme of “reaching the unreached”

- Promote the inclusion of arts into education curriculum to improve creative thinking and capacity

- Promote physical education (sports), especially at the primary level. A study carried out revealed 2,500 students produced poor results in this area which influences social/interpersonal skills
- Introduce programme for education for sustainable development to enhance education
- Increase capacity-building
- Develop sustainable activities that are measurable in terms of impact and outcome

4.2.5 Pacific

Group members identified strategic actions to be undertaken by Pacific Island Countries to achieve the six global EFA goals and reach the unreached. The participants noted that the strategies should be linked to the region's own *Pacific Education Development Framework*.

EFA goal 1: ECCE

Pacific country representatives identified the absence (and poor quality) of ECCE curriculum, the lack of teacher training and resources, the perception that ECCE is an extension of primary education, and governance as issues affecting the region's achievement of EFA goal 1.

- **Strategic action 1.1** – Build capacity of teachers in-service and pre-service
- **Strategic action 1.2** – Revise and develop curriculum and its implementation
- **Strategic action 1.3** – Improve awareness and promote ECCE through e.g. home-school partnership and parent involvement
- **Strategic action 1.4** – Revise Education Acts to expand the jurisdiction of governments to cover ECCE, thus ensuring government commitment to allocating resources to ECCE
- **Strategic action 1.1** – Improve resourcing. On average, government allocation to ECCE in the region is 0.1% of the entire education budget
- **Strategic action 1.1** – Improve coordination, e.g. by setting up a country-level focus group for ECCE

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EFA goal 2: Universal primary education

Obstacles to achieving EFA goal 2 were identified as the shortage of qualified teachers, the uneven quality of education provision, the lack of resources, the limited relevance of curriculum to day-to-day life, education inefficiencies (repeaters and drop outs), and monitoring difficulties (e.g. identifying out-of-school children).

- **Strategic action 2.1** – Revise the curriculum so that the content is more relevant to day-to-day life and allows learners to obtain basic, social and business skills (e.g. in Palau every child in secondary school is linked to an employment agency - "Transition programs")
- **Strategic action 2.2** – Establish systems for student well-being at the primary and secondary level (e.g. counseling, guidance)
- **Strategic action 2.3** – Ensure there are more teachers of good quality by improving professionalism of teachers, providing better training, and setting quality standards
- **Strategic action 2.4** – Develop a community liaison programme to monitor 'at risk' students
- **Strategic action 2.5** – Strengthen mechanisms for enforcing compulsory education policies and legislation
- **Strategic action 2.6** – Promote parental awareness on the importance of education

EFA goal 3: Life skills and lifelong learning

Participants identified as challenges to EFA goal 3 the difficulties in defining life skills, limited second-chance opportunities for out-of-school children, and providing life skills education for people in schools.

- **Strategic action 3.1** – Provide support to countries on how to identify relevant life skills and monitor their implementation across the curriculum
- **Strategic action 3.2** – Provide more second-chance education opportunities:
 - Set up CLCs using existing infrastructure for centres, noting the difficulty in urban areas to capture the population
 - Promote awareness of education to target populations
 - Strengthen partnerships with fellow ministries and organizations which address similar focus areas e.g. youth education
 - Identify the target population for education programmes and understand their needs
- **Strategic action 3.3** – Incorporate life skills education into the curriculum
- **Strategic action 3.4** – Ensure the content and delivery of curriculum is flexible
- **Strategic action 3.5** – Map the curriculum to see where the gaps are and which life skills are not addressed

EFA goal 4: Adult literacy

Participants identified obstacles to attaining EFA goal 4, including unreliable data collection, difficulty in defining and assessing literacy, and the absence of policy attention given to literacy. Also raised were issues relating to mother tongue language education, including the difficulties in teaching unstructured languages and the challenges of implementing language policy in an area of such diversity.

- **Strategic action 4.1** – Carry out research to establish the current status of literacy and illiteracy, which should be more than quantitative and be expansive in scope to capture all groups
- **Strategic action 4.2** – Develop and implement initiatives/programmes that respond to research findings
- **Strategic action 4.3** – Recruit and develop teachers from ethno-linguistic minority groups
- **Strategic action 4.4** – Develop literacy policy
- **Strategic action 4.5** – Integrate literacy questions into national censuses, household surveys, and other regular data collections

EFA goal 5: Gender parity and gender equality

Pacific country representatives identified the underachievement of boys in primary and secondary education, and cultural beliefs, traditions and entrenched social structures that keep certain people marginalized as obstacles to achieving gender equity.

- **Strategic action 5.1** – Mainstream gender into all parts of education. Review all curriculum documents and resources for gender responsiveness and ensure gender sensitization
- **Strategic action 5.2** – Improve retention rates of boys through revising teaching-learning processes and environments
- **Strategic action 5.3** – Increase the numbers of male school teachers through an affirmative action strategy
- **Strategic action 5.4** – Facilitate coordination among key partners for gender issues, e.g. coordinate with human rights groups

EFA goal 6: Quality of education

The participants identified obstacles that hinder the achievement of EFA goal 6, including insufficient finance to train teachers, a lack of consensus on the definition of quality (with the problematic emphasis on inputs rather than outcomes), the lack of professionalization of teachers and efficacy, the geographic isolation of some schools, disparities in working conditions/ environments for teachers, and the limited provision of curriculum materials.

- **Strategic action 6.1** – Strengthen the understanding of ‘quality’ and identify the relevant and viable indicators for measuring quality
- **Strategic action 6.2** – Implement systems to regularly monitor quality and develop responsive intervention initiatives
- **Strategic action 6.3** – Ensure an adequate budget for quality inputs (e.g. teacher training)
- **Strategic action 6.4** – Strengthen educational governance (including school management and boards) to ensure professional, responsive and efficient utilization of resources which will influence political decision-makers to support education
- **Strategic action 6.5** – Develop child-centred approaches to teaching-learning processes and environments
- **Strategic action 6.6** – Adjust funding formulas for isolated schools (e.g. in the Cook Islands through decreasing student-teacher ratio expectations, and for multigrade classes)
- **Strategic action 6.7** – Provide incentives to attract teachers to isolated schools
- **Strategic action 6.8** – Implement teacher performance management and monitoring, based on professional development goals
- **Strategic action 6.9** – Ensure teachers are trained and continuously upgraded
- **Strategic action 6.10** – Implement induction programmes for principals and teachers with responsibilities



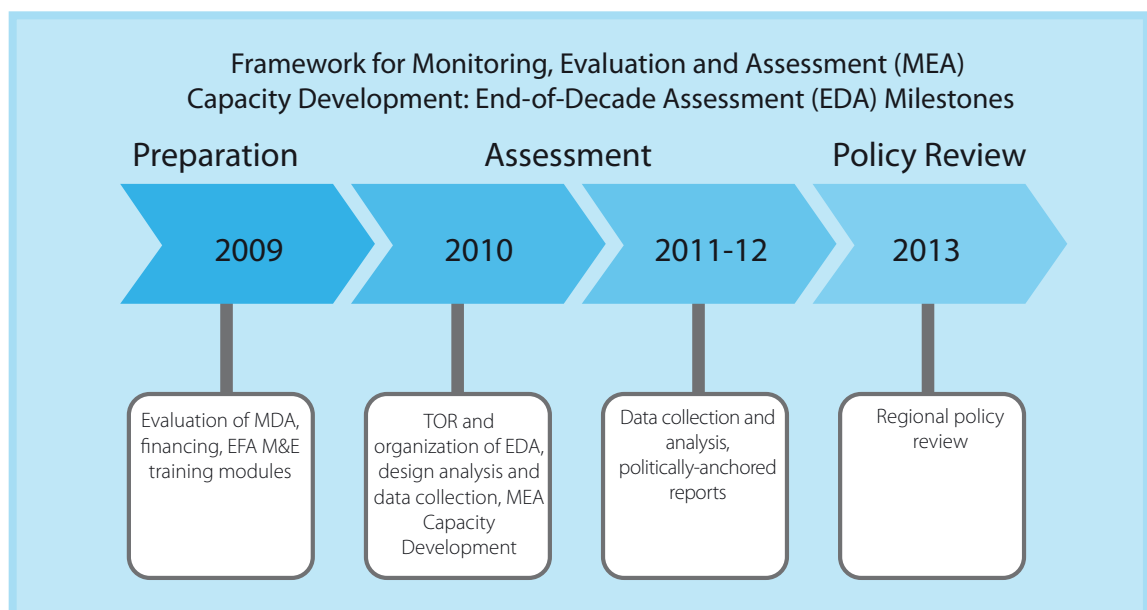
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5. Recommendations from EFA Partners

EFA partners present at the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators were asked to respond to the recommended policies, strategies and actions proposed by country representatives for the region and each sub-region, and suggest areas in which EFA partners can support countries in meeting EFA by 2015.

The following includes recommendations from UNESCO, the APPEAL Resources and Training Consortium (ARTC), members of the TWG on EFA (SEAMEO, ASPBAE, Baha'i International Community, FAO, ILO, Save the Children, SIL International, UNICEF EAPRO and ROSA, USAID, various Education units of UNESCO Bangkok as well as UNESCO Offices in Jakarta and Apia, and the GENIA and UNGEI networks.

UNESCO proposed that an end-of-decade assessment begin from 2010 to 2012, to culminate in a policy review in 2013. Set out below is the proposed timeline for an End-of-Decade Assessment of EFA.



As demonstrated during the EFA MDA, there is a need to continue building the capacity of countries to regularly monitor, evaluate and assess progress towards EFA. Members of the TWG on EFA will conduct capacity-building to support key needs, especially in areas where governments do not focus (e.g. ECCE, NFE, literacy assessment, improvement of indicators on quality on education, and analysis of disparities and information requirements for policy-making).

The MDA was the first time that all major education stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific were mobilized to collaborate and deliver technical assessments, policy reviews, and strategy and action plans to political decision-makers at the national, sub-regional and regional level. To assist in the design of the End-of-Decade Assessment of EFA, an evaluation of the MDA process is proposed to be carried out in 2010. This evaluation will: review the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact of the MDA; document good practices and lessons learned; and make recommendations for the next major assessments of EFA. It will be important for the MDA evaluation to have advanced sufficiently so that the main recommendations can be considered by partners prior to conducting a new assessment. The valuable lessons from the MDA should be used to make informed and evidence-based decisions in the design of the End-of-Decade Assessment process. Any resulting slippage in the calendar will have to be taken into account in planning the next EFA assessment.

The **APPEAL Resources and Training Consortium (ARTC)**, an inter-country cooperative mechanism designed to support and facilitate UNESCO Bangkok's APPEAL Unit's mission to reach the goal of EFA and lifelong learning in the Asia and Pacific Region, made the following recommendations:

- Strengthen regional EFA strategies through formulating sub-regional based strategies and programmes to reach the unreached and underserved, out-of-school children, illiterate youth and adults
- Specify the roles of stakeholders (EFA actors) at the regional, national, sub-national and community level to institutionalize collaborative work for EFA
- Promote collaboration among national and regional networks active in supporting ECCE, primary education, and literacy/NFE programmes from a lifelong learning perspective (e.g. ARNEC, GENIA, ARTC, and UNGEI)

The ARTC network is currently developing guidebooks and training modules on the planning and implementation of equivalency programmes, networking of CLCs for promoting lifelong learning, and life skills education for employment and entrepreneurship. The network is also building the capacity of countries to assess literacy and map NFE, and is conducting research on gender mainstreaming through NFE towards lifelong learning, with a specific focus on empowerment skills.

TWG on EFA

Members of the **Thematic Working Group (TWG) on EFA** met again on 9 June 2009 at UNESCO Bangkok for its 25th meeting to consider the recommendations from the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators vis-à-vis each member's priorities and identify areas that the TWG as a group can support.

Regional and sub-regional recommendations for East and South-East Asia, South and West Asia, and the Pacific from the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators were consolidated into matrices for TWG members to respond to and identify specific support and assistance their agency/organization could possibly provide. TWG members reviewed the recommendations and agreed that responses must meet the needs and priorities already set at the country and sector levels. Members further agreed that the TWG's main role should be in providing a regional response to the recommendations and stressed its importance for ensuring the coordination of activities, advocacy of policy priorities and information sharing.

The TWG member agencies/organizations represented at the 25th TWG meeting were ASPBAE, Baha'i International, ILO, Save the Children Sweden, SEAMEO, SIL International, UNESCO, UNICEF and USAID, with JICA as an observer. Other TWG members and UNESCO and UNICEF field offices gave their responses to the recommendations via email. The following section summarizes the areas that TWG members have indicated they are willing to support.⁴

For East and South-East Asia, **the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)** would like to prioritize the 10 project proposals endorsed by the SEAMEO Council and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education (Phuket, Thailand, April 2009). See Annex 2 for a list of the projects. Participants at the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators from East and South-East Asia decided to build on these 10 projects. Although some members of the TWG had previously indicated their support for certain projects at the 44th SEAMEO Council Meeting in April 2009, this was expanded to cover other agencies/organizations. Their support is detailed below.

Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) indicated its focus will be on policy research and advocacy. More specifically, ASPBAE will advocate that donors fund information gaps (e.g. unavailable data and profiles on the disadvantaged in education) and link regional TWG with national TWG on EFA and national education coalitions. For East and South-East Asia, ASPBAE expressed interest to support the SEAMEO-endorsed projects numbers 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 10.

The **Baha'i International Community** has expressed a willingness to support education promotion for women and girls at the regional level.

The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, in response to the regional policy recommendations, has indicated it is willing to provide the following support:

- 3.3 promote the use of CLCs and similar strategies (e.g. farmer field schools) for rural-level knowledge sharing and learning for communities (including women and youth) as part of its agricultural and rural development projects and activities (e.g. in Cambodia, Thailand and the Pacific region)
- 3.4 advocate and promote the strengthening and use of distance education, TVET and similar strategies as part of the EFA Flagship on Education for Rural People (ERP) and seek support for enabling projects, including researching and sharing of innovative practices
- 4.2 seek support for projects and activities to strengthen the curriculum and teaching of various target clientele, focusing primarily on agriculture and rural development, especially for poverty alleviation and sustainable development
- 6.2 (specifically the strategy of promoting effective coordination and consultation with stakeholders) and 7.1 continue to lead and promote ERP as an avenue for advocacy and strategic support to improve the accessibility, quality and quantity of formal and NFE

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4 In this section, the TWG member agencies' responses to the recommendations make specific numerical references to different sets of recommendations.

1. EFA Regional Policy Recommendations use two digits. The first number identifies the strategic objective and the second number, after a decimal, the policy recommendation: refer to section 4.1 Regional Policy Recommendations. E.g. 1.1 refers to strategic objective 1, policy recommendation 1: Strengthen policy towards children who are not in school and children who are at risk of dropping out of school

2. EFA Sub-Regional Policy Recommendations use a variety of approaches.

For East and South-East Asia, a single number from 1 to 10 is used to identify the SEAMEO-endorsed project number: refer to Annex 2. e.g. 1 refers to project 1: transition support for learners with disabilities

For South and West Asia, two digits are used. The first number identifies the strategic objective and the second number, after a decimal, the policy recommendation: refer to section 4.2.2 Sub-Regional Policy Recommendations: South and West Asia.

For the Pacific, two digits are used. The first number identifies the EFA goal and the second number, after a decimal, the strategic action: refer to section 4.2.5 Sub-Regional Policy Recommendations: Pacific.

sectors and training for rural people in the Asia-Pacific region in partnership with relevant ministries, agencies, NGOs, etc.

For East and South-East Asia, the FAO may support the SEAMEO-endorsed project numbers:

- 3 by presenting projects and innovative practices related to agriculture, nutrition and rural development
- 7 via advocacy, promotion and establishment of CLCs or related centres as part of projects for community learning and sharing related to agriculture, nutrition and rural development, including case studies on best practices in select countries such as Cambodia and Thailand
- 10 by linking environmental and resource management projects and activities to school-based ones that promote e.g. agriculture, forestry and fisheries components

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** prioritizes child labour and its nexus with educational attainment, access and opportunity. Its key areas of focus are likely to include institutional and transitional classes for older students who missed out on formal schooling, bridging courses and second chance education (through NFE). For East and South-East Asia, the ILO may be able to support the SEAMEO-endorsed project numbers 2, 3, 4, 7 and 10. More specifically, for project 2, ILO might assist in identifying child labour prevalent communities to target education assistance and other services such as school meals and income generative activities for families.

The priorities of **Save the Children (SC)** include early childhood development, pre-primary transition to primary education, community involvement in education, civil society development, primary schools, child-friendly schools, inclusive education and multilingual education. More specifically, in response to the regional matrix, SC has indicated a willingness to contribute to the regional policy recommendations as follows:

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- 1.1 support the Lao PDR and Viet Nam to establish a working group focused on inclusive education in their ministries of education
- 1.3 assist Bangladesh to produce complementary legislation that supports the right of all groups to unimpeded access to early childhood and basic education. SC may also support the development of policies with adequate funding to help the unreached and underserved to complete early childhood and basic education in Bangladesh and Lao PDR
- 2.2 in Bangladesh, Nepal and Cambodia, support the participation of children in education, especially girls from rural areas, slums, villages and underserved places
- 2.3 continue its support for holistic early childhood development policy and planning frameworks (allowing more time for women, promoting social equity, and providing learning opportunities for underserved groups) in countries including Viet Nam, the Philippines, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Myanmar
- 3.2 support Viet Nam, Nepal, the Philippines, and Bangladesh
- 3.3 support Nepal and the Philippines
- 3.4 assist Bangladesh
- 3.5 focus on the Philippines, Bangladesh and Viet Nam. Local language work is also beginning in Nepal
- 4.1 as SC has teacher education programmes in most countries, including Indonesia, Pakistan and Afghanistan
- 4.2 support Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Nepal and the Philippines

For the South and West Asia sub-region, SC may assist with the following policy recommendations:

- 1.1 support Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the strategy of improving databases (sex-disaggregated) through locally driven school mapping processes
- 2.1 support Bangladesh
- 3.1 for Nepal help create supportive environments for literacy practices in the community and for Bangladesh the development of equivalency programmes to generate synergies between non-formal and formal education systems
- 3.2 provide support to Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan
- 3.3 assist Bangladesh

For East and South-East Asia, SC has indicated an interest in the SEAMEO-endorsed project numbers 3 (a study has already been undertaken in Viet Nam on minority girls and education), 5 (specifically for Myanmar and Lao PDR), 6 (for Lao PDR), 7, 8 and 10 (particularly for Myanmar, Thailand and Timor Leste).

SIL International, in line with its mandate, will prioritize mother tongue language education, multilingual education, and multigrade teaching. More specifically, SIL will focus on developing learning materials for curriculum (including scripts in non-dominant languages), information on ethno-linguistic groups and maps, and compiling good practices for multilingual education.

For East and South-East Asia SIL may give support to the SEAMEO-endorsed project numbers 3, 6 (by considering multilingual issues related to multigrade teaching) and 7 (by providing training in developing materials in local languages).

For South and West Asia, SIL may contribute to policy recommendations 1.1 (by providing information related to ethno-linguistic communities, maps of linguistic homelands, etc., for use in identifying target groups), strategic objective 3 (through training and consulting on mother tongue-based multilingual education and literacy) and strategic objective 5 (by researching good practices related to multilingual education).

For the Pacific region, SIL may be able to support the following strategic actions:

- 1.1 by consulting on multilingual education for regional teacher training workshops on ECCE
- 1.2 by advising on the development of local early childhood learning materials for regional partners
- 2.1 by providing advice on translating and adapting curriculum for ethno-linguistic communities
- 2.3 by consulting on multilingual education for regional teacher training workshops
- 4.5 by providing consultation to government and civil society actors to develop/adapt literacy measurement tools to measure literacy levels in non-dominant languages
- 6.1 by providing input on multilingual implications on the definition of 'quality'
- 6.9 by providing training in multilingual education methods for regional teacher training workshops

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) has indicated it will support advocacy and capacity-building activities at the regional level. It is interested in the SEAMEO-endorsed 10 project proposals and wants to support a regional level approach to these projects with the TWG.

UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) priorities include social protection, HIV/AIDS, equity, rights and inclusion. It will look at identifying gaps in research, particularly inclusion in education.

The **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** is committed to education in the region, with each country-level mission designing their own programmes. USAID wants to ensure that programmes developed are appropriate to needs at the national level.

UNESCO Bangkok Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education will continue as the lead coordinator of EFA in the Asia-Pacific and will work with members of the TWG on EFA to strengthen EFA coordination and advocacy in the region. More specifically, each Unit will provide the following support.

- The **Asia and Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) Unit** will focus on teacher education and training, ECCE and lifelong learning. It will consider mainstreaming and institutionalizing cross-cutting issues and quality education and addressing target groups through identifying and understanding the barriers to education. Responding to the regional recommendations, APPEAL may support policy recommendation 1.1 by: assisting in developing regional and national guidelines and a research framework for case studies to identify reasons children are excluded from schooling or learning; providing technical support on gender sensitive statistics and analysis; using its experience in Lao PDR to institutionalize a coordination mechanism which includes inter-ministry, donors and other civil society partners (e.g. to establish focused working and technical groups); and providing technical support to design a comprehensive Inclusive Education framework/policy. For East and South-East Asia, APPEAL may contribute to the SEAMEO-endorsed project numbers 5 and 7.
- The **UIS-AIMS Unit** will focus on the End-of-Decade EFA Assessment, statistical capacity-building to institutionalize national data collection on priority disadvantaged groups, and conduct surveys on school conditions. At the regional level, UIS-AIMS will contribute to the regional policy recommendations in the following ways:
 - 1.1 provide technical advice to support the institutionalization of existing data collection processes with a legal framework and build the capacity of statisticians (and other relevant officers) to establish a comprehensive database for out-of-school children and those at risk of dropping out. UIS-AIMS is working with Afghanistan, Timor Leste, Nepal and Lao PDR to develop EMIS and Non-Formal Education Management Information Systems (NFEMIS), has ongoing EFA statistical capacity-building activities for education statisticians, and has a Japanese-funded project to develop training materials on EFA monitoring, evaluation and assessment (to be piloted in 3 to 4 countries in the region). Through these activities, UIS-AIMS will strengthen the statistical framework for vulnerable and underserved groups to assist countries present comparable statistics in the End-of-Decade EFA Assessment.
 - 1.2 to promote systematic monitoring and evaluation systems for sharing information between agencies and to involve other stakeholders in service delivery and monitoring at the local level to target the unreached groups, UIS-AIMS may be able to facilitate the coordination of national statistical agencies by acting as an 'honest broker' and advocating for best practice in the implementation of data collection storage and analysis.
 - 1.3 2.2 and 2.4 work with countries to provide the evidence base for the processes of developing policies to enable the unreached and underserved groups to complete early childhood and basic education, to implement national policies and strategies that support and promote inclusive and child-centred education and promote active participation of unreached and underserved groups in decision-making and implementation, and to expand policy attention to learners out-of-school and at risk of dropping out respectively, with considerations of gender.
 - 3.1 relevant to the recommended action to develop and implement a systematic literacy assessment system (indicator, tools and assessment) for children, youth and adults, UIS-AIMS already has an ongoing project being piloted in Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) focuses on collecting data on individual literate environments and the use of literacy materials at

the household and community-level for more effective policy-making and programme implementation. UIS-AIMS can share its findings from LAMP and on information literacy with other countries. This work may also support policy recommendation 3.3, to develop environments to support literacy practices. UIS is also considering conducting a library survey for Asia.

- 4.5 for the proposed action of designing an assessment framework to cater to unreached groups and address qualitative aspects of assessment of learning, UIS' work with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on PISA can be shared with countries. As discussed above, UIS-AIMS already has ongoing activities related to strengthening EMIS and NFEMIS in Afghanistan, Nepal, Timor Leste and Lao PDR. The UIS programme on Assessment Learning Outcomes can also provide advice on different approaches to school assessment.
- 5.1, UIS-AIMS may provide best practice and advocacy in favour of evidence-based policy-making and the most effective ways of delivering it, work with ministries of education to improve countries' understanding on the importance and use of international comparative data to encourage reporting, and work with EFA partners to assist countries prepare and undertake the End-of-Decade Assessment of EFA focusing on unreached and underserved groups. UIS will consider providing guidance on integrating data from different sources and share the results of the World Education Indicators Survey on Primary Schools (covering India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka) on factors linked to quality and equality in primary schools. UIS is now developing a 'light' version of this survey to implement across a greater number of countries.
- 5.2 UIS-AIMS has ongoing statistical capacity-building activities for EFA monitoring and evaluation, a Japanese-funded project on developing training materials for EFA monitoring, evaluation and assessment for piloting, and can work with EFA partners to assist countries in preparing for the End-of-Decade Assessment of EFA. UIS will endeavour to continue to support the interests of Asia-Pacific Member States in international fora and identify opportunities for them to participate in international programmes, whilst continuing its support for the formation and strengthening of regional fora in support of regional statistical capacity-building.
- 6.2 UIS-AIMS has a policy of training the trainers to allow cascading of statistical capacity-building from national to local levels, building the capacity of education systems and strengthening their middle tiers (e.g. district level).
- 7.1 continue to promote in the media findings of the MDA and advocacy focusing on the unreached groups.

For East and South-East Asia, UIS-AIMS will endeavour to provide support to the SEAMEO-endorsed project numbers 1, 2, 4 and 7.

- The **Education Policy and Reform (EPR) Unit** will offer assistance for effective use of resources, governance and accountability (e.g. a new regional study on secondary education financing, education planning and the preparation of proposals for the mobilization of funds). Regionally, EPR may assist with policy recommendations 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 6.1 and 6.2.
- The **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Unit** has expressed its will to focus on the following priority areas: generating content relevant to the unreached and vulnerable groups with special attention on curriculum and teacher education; ensuring sustainability of initial actions and activities and formulating required actions to take when out-of-school children are identified; ensuring recognition of NFE and formal learning and the integration of education into larger development strategies; increasing funding for governance and ensuring efficiency and transparency in governance. For East and South-East Asia, the ESD Unit will consider supporting SEAMEO's project numbers 2 (by designing the best suited follow-up action through

a workshop based on newly established information on most vulnerable child groups), 3 and 7 (by researching linkages and existing gaps between local decision-makers, learning settings and businesses).

UNESCO Jakarta has indicated it may assist supporting the regional policy recommendations set out below. In many instances, the office has already been working with its cluster countries in support of strategies similar to those identified in the regional policy recommendations:

- 1.1 the Jakarta office has been building the capacity of Timor Leste's Ministry of Education in policy development and education programme implementation through strengthening its Educational Statistical Information System (ESIS) and activities focusing on children with disabilities.
- 1.2 the office has co-organized a "Workshop on Creating Inclusive, Child Friendly and Gender Sensitive Schools", with a focus on children with disabilities. It is looking to further support government endeavours through training education officials and undertaking joint activities to provide inclusive quality education for disabled children – South-South and North-South-South cooperation.
- 2.2 the office has previously organized Child Friendly Schools (CFS) activities and programmes within the framework of the Creating Learning Communities for Children (CLCC) programme, which supports child participation (especially for girls in rural and slum areas, villages and underserved places) and the monitoring of child-friendly programmes.
- 2.3 UNESCO Jakarta has organized inclusive, child friendly and gender sensitive activities and will endeavour to assist Timor Leste in strengthening ECCE through the development and use of an ECCE Teacher Training Package.
- 2.5 the office has already organized a relevant workshop.
- 2.6 assist Indonesia to implement and track gender mainstreaming in all educational systems within the ESD framework, to conduct country studies and give a capacity development seminar.
- 3.1 support the Philippines in designing an alternative delivery mode and learning system for emergency education in Mindanao and strengthen their informal education for indigenous people. It may also be able to strengthen the capacity of Timor Leste's Ministry of Education in NFE and help Indonesia to organize training on innovative models of literacy education under ESD, UNLD and LIFE initiatives.
- 3.2 the office has already supported Timor Leste's key representative to participate in a variety of relevant meetings and workshops in the region.
- 3.3 UNESCO Jakarta has assisted the non-formal and informal education personnel of Indonesia's Ministry of National Education in strengthening their institutional capacities in providing CLCs during their participation in the "International Seminar on CLCs" held on 23-27 June 2008 in Bandung (Indonesia).
- 3.4 help the Philippines strengthen its assessment packages for alternative learning systems, basic literacy, and accreditation and equivalency programmes.
- 3.5 the office has already supported key Timor Leste Ministry of Education representatives to participate in a number of relevant activities.
- 4.1 within the CLCC programme framework, support has been provided to consolidate and develop capacity for demonstrable models of good education practices at the primary level, and to institutionalize and sustain CLCC practices in Indonesia. This support is also relevant to policy recommendation 6.2.

- 4.2 assist Timor-Leste's Ministry of Education to expand and develop its secondary vocational education system through curriculum development, teacher training, providing equipment, and school management development, as well as assist the Philippines to integrate sustainable development in its basic education curriculum.
- 4.3 with UNESCO Bangkok, support Timor-Leste in adapting, translating and disseminating the "HIV Preventive Education Information Kit for School Teachers".
- 4.4 in cooperation with Air Putih Foundation, UNESCO Jakarta has developed the Orca Ubuntu Free/Open Source Software for people with visual impairment and organized trainings on its use, developed an electronic book database, and provided and disseminated learning materials to special schools for the visually impaired.
- 4.5 help Timor Leste's Ministry of Education strengthen the quality of basic education through developing an improved school performance appraisal system and providing training for inspectors at all levels on its implementation. The Jakarta office with UNESCO Bangkok has conducted capacity-building activities for officials in policy development and education programme implementation through ESIS, relevant to policy recommendations 4.5 and 5.1.
- 6.1 and 7.1 UNESCO Jakarta notes its "Focusing on Children with Disabilities" activity will assist its cluster countries in providing inclusive quality primary and junior secondary education for children with disabilities. The office may also launch the most recent EFA Global Monitoring Reports and conduct seminars in Indonesia for policy-makers to share their experiences through country analysis reports, and propose recommendations and concrete action plans for reducing inequalities and accelerating progress towards EFA.

For East and South-East Asia, UNESCO Jakarta is willing to support the SEAMEO-endorsed project numbers 1 and 2. The Jakarta office also noted that it may be able to provide technical assistance to its cluster countries to carry out an End-of-Decade Assessment of EFA.

UNESCO Apia will support countries in the Pacific region to conduct an End-of-Decade Assessment to find out what each country needs to focus on from 2010-2015. The office is also proposing a strategy for institutionalizing the monitoring and evaluation of education progress in each country, with a focus on the EFA goals.

The **Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA)** and **United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)** have indicated their support for SEAMEO's project number 3.

Other TWG members who did not respond to the matrices, but have previously indicated their commitment to SEAMEO-endorsed project proposals for East and South-East Asia are:

- ARNEC for project 5
- ATD Fourth World for project 7
- Disabilities Action Council for projects 1 and 2
- Education Development Centre for projects 7 and 9
- E-Net Philippines for project 10
- Plan International for project 5
- UNAIDS for project 9
- UNESCO Hanoi for project 6
- World Food Programme (WFP) for project 3



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6. Conclusion

In response to the many recommended policies, strategies and actions proposed by country representatives for the region and each sub-region, EFA partners, development financing and technical agencies, NGOs, advocacy organizations, etc., have indicated areas in which they can provide support for meeting EFA by 2015.

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As time is short, EFA partners' prompt follow-up on these commitments is much needed as a further catalyst to ensure that their activities align with those of all the countries in Asia-Pacific.

Countries and EFA partners need to work closely together to ensure that the EFA goals are reached by 2015 and no one is left behind, jointly striving to achieve Education for All by expanding education at all levels to meet the needs of all those who live and work in the region, especially the unreached and underserved who need education to reduce disadvantages and raise themselves out of poverty.

The urgency of prioritizing and meeting the needs of the unreached groups in education has further been compounded after the world suffered a banking crisis in 2008 whose effects have reverberated outside of the financial sector. The crisis puts to risk the gains made by countries in meeting the EFA goals as government revenues start to fall and aid to education may decline.

Prioritizing spending for education, in particular targeted financing for unreached groups, is one of the key recommendations made by the participants to the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators. This recommendation becomes much more important at a time when countries are grappling with the effects of the financial crisis.

As the MDA and the annual EFA Global Monitoring Report has showed, the EFA goals will not be met in most countries in Asia-Pacific unless concerted action and resources is focused on the unreached, underserved and marginalized groups in education. To this end, the following recommendations from the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators meetings are crucial if the six EFA goals are to be met by 2015:

- Strengthening existing data collection processes to provide information on unreached groups to support evidence-based decision-making processes

- Policy-making, intervention and initiatives to explicitly target the unreached groups, including out-of-school children and youth, those at risk of dropping out of school, geographically isolated groups, ethnic and linguistic minorities, etc.
- Initiatives to promote and support education for girls and women
- Comprehensive policies on literacy, which also address learning assessment, mother tongue-based multilingual literacy programmes and the need to create literate environments
- Equivalency programmes which create synergies between non-formal and formal education systems
- Standards and norms for teacher and facilitator competencies, which address inclusion and learner-centred teaching-learning processes and environments
- Life-skills and sustainable education from a lifelong perspective, that is relevant for learners and delivered using alternative and flexible approaches
- Capacity-building of decision-makers in evidence-based policy making and planning, management and budgeting for inclusion

It is hoped that governments, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, civil society groups and other development partners work together to deliver on the shared commitment of EFA, a commitment to education as a basic human right for all children, youth and adults.

Annexes

Annex 1: Summary of Recommendations made at the South-East Asia EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference (18-21 February 2008, Jomtien, Thailand)

Policy Recommendations

1. Shift the policy attention to children who are not in school. Introduce and promote the concept of “child seeking schools.” Ensure accessibility of education services and facilities, especially for unreached, at-risk, and other disadvantaged children, youth and adults (girls and ethnic minority/ethno linguistic minority groups).
2. Targeted financial support to disadvantaged children, youth and adults, including direct support to children of poor families, and incentives for disadvantaged groups for them to complete secondary education and/or attend NFE programmes. Policy for easier re-enrolment to formal system, especially for young parents.
3. Eliminate direct and indirect school fees in basic education. Provide free services and alternative delivery modes (e.g. mobile teaching, learning modules, etc.).
4. Implement policies that permit and encourage the use of mother tongue in education, and acknowledge and support teachers to adapt textbooks and documents in the national language to the local language in the classroom (especially at the pre-primary to Grade 3 levels). Carry out or support studies that assess the impact of language of instruction on learning. Encourage the use of local content in some subjects, where local knowledge is important.
5. Develop environments that support literacy practices. Conduct research and share information about literacy and lifelong learning best practices.
6. Develop a clear policy framework that identifies the potential of youth and their role to help achieve EFA, including the identification of a focal point for youth participation within the government and the establishment of National Councils of Young People who will meet in an annual forum and comment on proposed government policies. This policy should also allot resources to support youth activities and stipulate the creation of Student Government/Councils in all schools, with a focal point in government. Hold regular dialogues with the youth sector.
7. Adopt and adapt INEE minimum standards to address issues related to children in emergency situations.
8. Develop policy and implementation guidelines for NFE, TVET and higher education, including distance learning and adopting a ‘ladderized’ approach. Set a policy framework (including implementation guidelines) on NFE equivalency in Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary, and its institutionalization within government and partners, with a separate budget.
9. Expand budget for pre-schools attached to primary schools so that older siblings can attend.
10. Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in the educational system. Ensure allocation of resources for promoting gender equality in education. Ensure gender-responsive teaching and learning processes and materials. Monitor and evaluate progress in mainstreaming gender in education systems (processes, achievements and outcomes).

11. Utilization of SEAMEO Regional Centres for training of teachers.
12. Better resource allocation of and increased resources for teachers, funds, materials, and improving accessibility for the unreached. Mobilize/allocate adequate resources in support of:
 - inclusive education, including for alternative delivery modes and alternative learning systems
 - promoting gender equality in education
 - mother tongue education and literacy efforts (3% of the overall education budget for adult literacy efforts)
 - education monitoring and evaluation, particularly of the EFA National Action Plan.

Acknowledging that governments have limited resources, look at innovative methods of delivering quality education for all and get donors to increase support to education in developing countries. (Governments are encouraged to increase the allocation share for basic education; and strive to reach the desired level of 6% of GNP, and 20% of the national budget for education as a whole). Urge donors to meet their commitments based on the Paris Declaration.

13. Develop multi-year planning and budgeting process that would assure budget predictability (e.g. MTEF).
14. Develop a framework of operation that would assure linkage of policies, planning, and budgeting (programme-based budgeting). Undertake regional research and capacity-building in the methodology that assures the linkage between policy, planning, and budgeting and implementation for EFA.
15. Promote decentralization based on child's rights (UNCRC). Involve civil society and the community in the budget processes within the framework of decentralization of the governance of basic education.
16. Improve data/information availability. Adopt a policy that will address the coordination and harmonization of resources and activities by governments and partners in the collection of EFA-relevant information, including: mapping to identify children excluded from schooling or learning; collection of sex-disaggregated data; mapping of key partners active in youth participation, and form an alliance of these partners.
 - promote the use of data from several sources, including from external sources such as civil society organizations and community organizations
 - use a common ICT platform (e.g. websites) for easier coordination and compilation of data and its dissemination
 - advocate for the full utilization of ICT solutions to compile/share information.
17. Establish national mechanisms for the effective monitoring and evaluation of EFA, including setting up and/or strengthening the National EFA Forum, the role of the national EFA Coordinator, and sub-national entities with a mandate to coordinate data collection and compilation across relevant ministries and other stakeholders.
18. Develop national capacities at all levels of the system with regard to systematic monitoring of the goals and targets of EFA, the dissemination and utilization of EFA relevant information and ensuring provision of sufficient human resources for basic monitoring of the education system.
19. Conduct dedicated and regular household surveys on education to better understand key issues of the education system, including the unreached adults, and school-aged children

and youth, through government funding as well as support from development partners. Ensure that adequate questions on education and literacy are included in relevant and regular household surveys undertaken by the National Statistics Office.

20. Enhance partnerships and advocacy efforts. Strengthen partnerships between the government, community, NGOs, and the private sector to reach out to the excluded. Mobilize a wide range of stakeholders in a coordinated manner to campaign for the realization of EFA. There is a need for advocacy among policy makers. Encourage information sharing among South-East Asian countries in relation to experiences in education.

Additional Policy Recommendations

- Utilization of ICTs for other aspects of education, including the delivery of education using ICT and for governance.
- Develop policies that provide for the explicit inclusion of children and adults with disabilities, as well as policies that address the transition from school to work of people with disabilities. In relation to this, encourage countries to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Annex 2: Summary of Collaborative Projects to Reach the Unreached in Education and Attain Education for All Goals in South-East Asia

The projects listed below are based on the output from the SEAMEO-UNESCO-ASEAN “Reaching the Unreached: Meeting of South-East Asian countries to Achieve the EFA Goals Together by 2015” held in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2008. The 10 projects were approved and endorsed by the South-East Asian Education Ministers at the 44th SEAMEO Council Conference in April 2009 in Phuket, Thailand. The SEAMEO-Council-endorsed projects were used as basis for the discussion among East and South-East Asian representatives at the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators. The matrix below was updated in July 2010, based on the most recent SEAMEO Centre Directors Meeting on 14-16 July 2010

Project (Number and title)	Target Groups	Cooperating SEAMEO Centres	Lead Countries	Participating Countries	EFA Partners	Components/Activities
			(per SEAMEO 31st HOM, ASEAN 3rd SOM-ED and 44th SEAMEC Conference discussions)			
1. Transition support for learners with disabilities	Learners with disabilities or with special educational needs	SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (SEAMEO BIOTROP)	Malaysia	Brunei Darussalam Indonesia Lao PDR Philippines Timor Leste Viet Nam	Disability Action Council, Cambodia; UNESCO UIS-AIMS	Policy formulation, data collection, exchange programme/training, establish a regional centre
2. Tracking system for students at risk of dropping out	Under-performing students, students at risk of dropping out	SEAMEO Regional Training Centre (SEAMEO RETRAC)	Philippines	Lao PDR Malaysia Singapore Thailand	UNICEF EAPRO Disability Action Council, Cambodia; UNESCO UIS-AIMS; ASPBAE	Inventory of existing research, identify student tracking and profiling system, workshop to develop framework, system development, toolkit development, capacity-building
3. Conference to promote awareness of education for girls and women	Girls and women in rural areas and ethnic minorities	SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPAFA)	Malaysia	Cambodia Indonesia Lao PDR Philippines Timor Leste	UNIFEM UNICEF EAPRO ASPBAE UNGEI	Sharing of best practices in budget-based gender, school supplementary food programmes, gender responsive projects, basic education for girls
4. Tracking mechanism for unreached populations	Learners from remote and rural communities; children who are not registered in schools	SEAMEO BIOTROP SEAMEO RETRAC SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre (SEAMEO SEAMOLEC)	Viet Nam	Lao PDR Malaysia Myanmar Philippines	ASPBAE UNESCO UIS-AIMS	Research, exchange visits, capacity-building

Project (Number and title)	Target Groups	Cooperating SEAMEO Centres	Lead Countries	Participating Countries	EFA Partners	Components/Activities
			(per SEAMEO 31st HOM, ASEAN 3rd SOM-ED and 44th SEAMEC Conference discussions)			
5. Pre-school programme for all	Children from poor families	SEAMEO Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) SEAMEO RECSAM SEAMEO SEAMOLEC SEAMEO Tropical medicine (TROPMED) Network SEAMEO TROPMED/Indonesia SEAMEO TROPMED/Philippines	Brunei Darussalam	Lao PDR Malaysia Myanmar Thailand	UNICEF EAPRO Save the Children ARNEC UNESCO APPEAL Plan International	Study visits, capacity-building, development of regional school readiness competencies, provision of technical assistance to member countries in enriching national standards and curriculum, establishment of pre-schools in remote areas, provision of support services such as feeding, monitoring and evaluation
6. Multigrade Teaching	Learners from remote, dispersed and isolated areas	SEAMEO INNOTECH SEAMEO Regional Centre for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel (QITEP) in Language SEAMEO QITEP in Mathematics SEAMEO QITEP in Science SEAMEO RECSAM SEAMEO SEAMOLEC	Lao PDR	Cambodia Malaysia Thailand Timor Leste	UNICEF EAPRO ASPBAE UNESCO Hanoi	Development of guidelines for training of multigrade teachers, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation
7. Development of more community-based learning centres in rural areas in South-East Asia for Literacy and Livelihood	Children, youth and adults from poor families in rural/ remote/ isolated areas	SEAMEO BIOTROP SEAMEO INNOTECH SEAMEO RECSAM SEAMEO SEAMOLEC SEAMEO SPAFA SEAMEO TROPMED/Indonesia	Thailand	Lao PDR Malaysia	ATD Fourth World Save the Children UNESCO UIS-AIMS UNESCO APPEAL UNICEF EAPRO UNCHR ASPBAE ILO Education Development Center, Inc.	Inter-ministerial coordination, assessment and work planning, establishment of centres, capacity-building, entrepreneurship, monitoring and evaluation

Project (Number and title)	Target Groups	Cooperating SEAMEO Centres	Lead Countries	Participating Countries	EFA Partners	Components/Activities
			(per SEAMEO 31st HOM, ASEAN 3rd SOM-ED and 44th SEAMEC Conference discussions)			
8. Inter-country schooling programme for stateless and undocumented children (coordination between governments)	Stateless/non-documented children in the states' borders	SEAMEO QITEP in Science	Indonesia	Cambodia Lao PDR Malaysia Myanmar Philippines Thailand Timor Leste Viet Nam	UNICEF EAPRO UNCHR Save the Children	Setting-up of special border schools
9. Project on HIV and AIDS using an integrated approach (providing education, care, treatment and counseling services to learners affected or infected by HIV and AIDS)	Children, youth and adults infected and affected by HIV and/or AIDS	SEAMEO SPAFA SEAMEO TROPED/ Network SEAMEO Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (SEAMEO VOCTECH)	Thailand	Lao PDR Malaysia Myanmar	UNAIDS UNICEF EAPRO Education Development Center, Inc.	Data collection, care and treatment, curriculum strengthening, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation
10. Education in emergencies and disaster preparedness	Children in difficult circumstances	SEAMEO QITEP in Mathematics SEAMEO SPAFA SEAMEO TROPED/ Network SEAMEO TROPED/ Indonesia SEAMEO TROPED/ Philippines	Indonesia Philippines	Lao PDR Malaysia Myanmar Thailand Timor-Leste Viet Nam	UNICEF EAPRO E-Net Philippines Save the Children ASPBAE INEE	Provision of kits and guidelines, teachers and community involvement, refurbishment of structures, advocacy

Note: The meeting participants indicated SEAMEO, UNESCO and ASEAN as “EFA partners” in all the 10 proposals.

Annex 3: Summary of Recommendations made at the South Asia EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference (16-19 June 2008, Kathmandu, Nepal)

Policy Recommendations of Working Groups on:

- I. Issues related to inclusive education, including gender equality and social equity issues in EFA (access, opening school to diversity and expanding early childhood education, primary and secondary education)**
 1. Governments promote, protect, and fulfil free and compulsory education for all children, regardless of their status.
 2. All pre-service and in-service training should include mandatory components which provide all teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitude to respond to the diverse needs of all learners in order that they reach their full potential in education.
 3. Sensitize and train education management to issues of inclusive education in order to fulfil right to education.
 4. Curriculum, materials and facilities should be relevant, inclusive, accessible, and acceptable (gender responsive).
 5. Utilize the linkages and create synergy between formal and non-formal education.
 6. Develop systems for both students and schools which recognize a variety of ways for measuring success.
 7. The system structure should be centred around the best interest of the child.

- II. Issues related to improving literacy in multilingual areas through mother tongue as medium of instruction**
 1. As part of a larger mobilization process to refocus adult literacy, it is recommended that countries aim to allocate 3% of their education budget to adult literacy by 2010.
 2. To ensure more effective learning, it is recommended as part of a broader multilingual education (MLE) strategy, where possible, that children are able to access mother tongue instruction for ECCE and the first three years of their schooling, and adults and out of school youth are able to access literacy instruction in their mother tongue. Develop clear and comprehensive MLE policies and guidelines to inform mother tongue instruction initiatives.
 3. Provide programmes and avenues for re-entry into the education system, equivalency programmes, programmes for continuous learning and lifelong learning, both in the formal and non-formal education systems.

- III. Issues related to improving quality of education, especially teacher training and learning achievement**
 1. A comprehensive teacher education policy which would lay down norms and standards for all aspects of teacher education in the country.
 2. Policy to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of curriculum implementation.

IV. Issues related to financing EFA for reaching the poor, including governance, costing decentralization and accountability

1. Ensure increased and rational allocation of financial resources for the unreached groups and underserved on vertical equity basis.
2. Strengthen governance and accountability to ensure efficient and effective utilization of resources for EFA.

Recommendations from South Asia National EFA Coordinators

- Utilize SAARC as a venue for information exchange on education and explore possibility of establishing an EFA desk.
- Establish exchange programmes among countries to focus on good practices, including organizing actual visits.
- As a follow-up to this conference, develop a publication on strategies and good practices.
- Hold high-level meetings with Education Ministers, Education Secretaries and EFA Coordinators participating to cover technical details of EFA – both at the Asia-Pacific and sub-regional level.
- Create venue for information exchange for small island states.
- Provide assistance to strengthen EFA Coordination within the Ministry, and in expanding EFA Coordination to cover other Ministries involved in education.
- Establish or strengthen EFA Forum in countries, including at lower levels.
- Establish a Resource Centre that will include new studies and other information on EFA; information sharing via email.
- Continued UNESCO support for technical assistance in capacity-building on EFA monitoring.
- UNESCO assistance in school mapping.

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Recommendations from EFA Partners

- Improve the coordination among EFA partners to streamline the support mechanism.
- Launch national MDA reports and translate into regional languages (example is the plan to translate the national MDA Report of India into regional languages).
- Hold media trainings for EFA combined with launches of the MDA reports.
- Capacity-building on EFAInfo
 - Generating statistics
 - Using information.
- Encourage the involvement of donors at the regional level.
- Expand the membership of the Regional Thematic Working Group (TWG) on EFA.

Recommendations on EFA Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment (based on bilateral country consultations)

- Establish/strengthen mechanism for monitoring of EFA at the country level (from national to sub-national level) with an adequate and effective support team.
- Encourage participation in the process rather than mere reporting.
- Promote dialogue and information exchange among countries which have similarities.

- Promote institutional linkages.
- Share regularly the progress made in the field of EFA.
- Establish regional capacity-building programme to support the monitoring of EFA at the national level.
- Form a regional body to manage and coordinate the regional capacity-building programme and facilitate information and resources sharing.

Next steps in EFA Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment

- With advice and input from the countries and EFA partners, prepare a concept paper on developing a regional capacity-building programme.
- Get consensus from countries on these regional capacity-building programme.
- Countries and EFA partners to identify and prioritize the areas and activities needed for the regional capacity programme, and prepare a workplan.
- Mobilize resources to implement the regional capacity-building programme.
- Establish a Regional EFA body composed of country representatives to provide guidance, direction and to monitor the capacity-building programme.

Annex 4: Summary of Recommendations made at the Central Asia EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference (10 December 2008, Dushanbe, Tajikistan)

The participants in the Central Asia EFA Mid-Term Policy Review by EFA Coordinators and Launch of the 2008 Global Monitoring Report commit themselves to the achievement of the EFA goals and targets.

The EFA MDA has demonstrated that there has been significant progress in each country. At the same time the findings of the national and Central Asian assessments raise some critical issues of urgency to be taken into account.

To achieve EFA goals it is recommended to executive and legislative bodies in countries of Central Asia to:

EFA Goal 1

- Increase access to ECCE programmes by 5%-10% by 2015, especially for socially disadvantaged groups
- Strengthen and/or increase access to pre-primary education for children 5-6 years old (for better readiness to school)
- Pay special attention to the early childhood programmes for children 0-3 years old.

EFA Goal 2

- Ensure data collection and analysis on drop-outs and non-attendance for follow-up actions
- Consider the educational needs of all disadvantaged groups of children
- Integrate into national Education Strategy the development of the comprehensive concept for inclusive education as a holistic approach for inclusive teaching/learning, taking into account the diversity of needs of all children.

EFA Goal 3

- Integrate into education content and teaching technologies the concept of "life skills education" linked to national priorities for sustainable development and lifelong learning
- Reorient education content and curricula to integrate life skills programmes into teacher training and re-training.

EFA Goal 4

- Integrate into Education Strategy the development of approach and the concept of NFE, as a platform for expanding lifelong learning opportunities for youth and adults
- Review literacy concept with a focus on learning achievements as applied to functional literacy
- Integrate into national statistics a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of NFE.

EFA Goal 5

- Consider gender-sensitive aspects during development of curricula and teaching/learning materials
- Develop policy to provide gender balance in teacher education.

EFA Goal 6

Promote quality education by:

- Revising national educational curricula and standards

- Upgrading teacher training programmes and curricula
- Providing professional expertise for textbooks and teaching-learning materials according to the educational standards
- Using Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies for quality education (quality assurance standards, teaching-learning methods)
- Conduct stage-by-stage (phased) monitoring of learning achievements.

EFA Coordination

- Strengthen the partnerships and coordination of efforts among all key partners (government, relevant ministries, NGOs, international and donor organizations), including the leading coordination role of the Ministry of Education
- Revitalize the role and responsibilities of the EFA coordinators and other EFA focal points approved by the Ministry of Education and enhance focal points' internal cooperation in monitoring and evaluating the EFA goals within the framework of national education strategies
- Enhance collaboration and networking among all national key partners using a top-down and bottom-up approach to collect and disseminate good practices and information and experiences
- Raise public and media awareness on the EFA priorities and obstacles
- Conduct trainings for mass media on highlighting EFA issues
- Integrate results and recommendations of the National MDA into national strategies and provide wide dissemination of National MDA reports in countries
- Use the Central Asian Education Forum as a platform for EFA goals monitoring and capacity development in Member States
- Develop capacities in statistical data collection and analysis notably related to comparative analysis based on the indicators that have been developed
- Develop capacities in results-based education planning, management and budgeting.

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Education Financing

- Enhance country commitments to the EFA ownership, by mobilizing human and financial resources to achieve the EFA goals
- Increase budget allocations to a minimum of 6% of GDP.

Education Statistics

Consider common approaches regarding:

- The development of gender disaggregated indicators for the monitoring and evaluation and NFE, with focus on vulnerable groups
- The correlation of education levels as applied to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)
- Strengthen cooperation and coordination between the National Agencies for Statistics and the Ministries of Education in data collection and analysis with a view to achieving coherence in educational statistics including reporting to UIS.

The participants request international and donor organizations to:

- Provide special training on the development of common indicators for EFA assessment for a group of experts from the Ministry of Education and National Agency for Statistics from Central Asian countries and other relevant organizations
- Initiate activities on NFE promotion to achieve EFA goals.

Annex 5: Consolidated Regional Policy Recommendations on Reaching the Unreached based on Sub-Regional Policy Recommendations from South-East, South and Central Asia, and the Pacific

i. Policy recommendations on issues related to inclusive education, including gender and social equity and equality in education from early childhood to adult education in both formal and non-formal sectors

1. Expand the policy attention to children who are not in school and children who are at risk of dropping out of school.
2. Remove all cost and legal barriers to accessing early childhood and basic education through eliminating school fees and indirect costs (e.g. school uniforms, building maintenance fees, lunch); providing targeted financial support to the unreached and underserved children; and reforming legislation so that all children (regardless of their status) have the right to unimpeded access to education.
3. Implement national policies and strategies that support and promote inclusive and child-centred education, to include youth, and promote active participation of unreached and underserved groups in decision-making and implementation.
4. Provide inclusive education training to teachers/facilitators and school staff to enhance their capacity to respond to the diverse needs of all learners, and to school management committees and government officials (e.g. Ministry of Education officials) to sensitize them to the issues of diversity and inclusive education and how to apply inclusive principles in policy-making, planning, programming, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation.
5. Provide teaching-learning materials, processes, education services and facilities that are accessible, inclusive, gender-sensitive, relevant, non-discriminatory, and address and respond to the diverse needs of all learners, especially the unreached, at-risk, and other disadvantaged children, youth and adults (girls and ethnic minority/ethno linguistic minority groups).
6. Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in the educational system, including ensuring gender balance in teacher education, and research on the gender differences in educational achievement of boys and girls.

ii. Policy recommendations on issues related to improving literacy, particularly of unreached and underserved populations through formal and non-formal settings and the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction

1. Attain basic and functional literacy for the unreached and underserved populations through implementation of comprehensive policies that permit and encourage the use of mother tongue language instruction for early childhood education and the early years of schooling, and in non-formal and adult literacy programmes.
2. Provide adequate resources, teachers and facilitators and training for them to support the delivery of mother tongue education that is relevant to the local context for all age groups.
3. Develop environments to support literacy practices in classrooms, libraries, community learning centres for sustained learning and the home, including through the provision of reading materials in local languages (newspapers, magazines, books, etc.).

4. Review the concept of literacy with focus on learning achievements, as per Abuja benchmarks for literacy⁵, as applied to functional literacy and assess literacy in the languages in which literacy is taught, not just the national or official language.
5. Provide programmes in both the formal and non-formal systems for youth and adults to continue their education in programmes that meet their diverse needs, and create linkages between the two systems to recognize equivalency to bridge the gaps.

iii. Policy recommendations on issues related to improving the quality of education, especially teacher training and learning achievement

1. Implement comprehensive national policies on teacher/facilitator education which sets the norms and standards for teacher/facilitator competencies, and provide ongoing professional development.
2. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of curriculum implementation and develop sustainable content for course materials in school and TVET curriculum.
3. Develop good quality teaching and learning resources and facilities, including the use of ICTs in teaching-learning processes, teacher training, distance learning, etc.
4. Develop assessment frameworks and institute regular monitoring of learning achievements that recognize a variety of ways for measuring success.
5. Integrate into education content, teaching-learning processes and teacher training HIV and AIDS prevention, and the concept of “life skills education” linked to national priorities for sustainable development and lifelong learning.

IV. Policy recommendations on issues related to EFA monitoring and evaluation

1. Institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA at the sub-national, national, sub-regional and regional levels with adequate and effective human resource support and active participation from all key partners (local and national governments, INGOs, civil society groups, UN agencies, and donors) in the process.
2. Develop national capacity in statistical data collection and analysis for more effective monitoring and evaluation of EFA that provides comprehensive information about the unreached and underserved populations and promote the use of disaggregated data in policy making, planning, programming, evaluation and budgeting.
3. Establish a regional capacity-building programme to support the monitoring of EFA at the national level.

V. Policy recommendations on issues related to financing and governance

1. Ensure adequate investment in resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, including targeted support for the unreached and underserved populations, and the efficient and effective utilization of these resources.
2. Mobilize adequate financial resources and if possible, earmarked amounts, to support the delivery of:

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5 Refer to the Adult Literacy benchmarks and Abuja Call for Action:
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001631/163170e.pdf>
<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/education/literacy&id=21302&type=Document>

- inclusive education in early childhood, primary and secondary education through a more coordinated approach, meeting the diverse learning needs of the unreached and underserved groups, including disadvantaged and marginalized girls
 - literacy efforts and language-appropriate education that is relevant to the local context
 - monitoring and evaluation of EFA
 - targeted support for unreached and underserved populations, and disadvantaged children, youth and adults.
3. Strengthen governance and accountability systems to ensure that resources for EFA are used efficiently and effectively.
 4. Encourage the active participation of marginalized groups in decision-making and implementation to meet educational needs of all children, youth and adults.

VI. Policy recommendations on issues related to partnerships, coordination, and technical and financial support for EFA in the Asia-Pacific region

1. Institutionalize partnerships, and technical and financial support for EFA in the Asia-Pacific region in a streamlined and coordinated manner, including in the area of participatory systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA.
2. Strengthen cooperation, coordination, joint-actions, and information sharing between countries and all key partners of EFA utilizing the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA and existing sub-regional bodies such as the Central Asian Education Forum, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
3. Promote dialogue, collaboration, and information exchange among countries in the Asia-Pacific region that have similarities, such as small island states.
4. Strengthen sector-wide approaches to education tailored to the local context of each country at the same time strengthen the commitment to the Paris Declaration principles amongst countries, donors, development partners, including instilling a sense of mutual accountability in support of these principles.
5. Raise the profile of EFA among concerned stakeholders and increase public and media awareness on EFA, the EFA priorities and challenges, including the holding of high-level meetings with Education Ministers and EFA Coordinators to cover also technical details of EFA. Include flagships of LIFE, ARTC and UNLD, and media at national level as stakeholders to help EFA. In short, EFA for all age groups, especially children and adolescents (girls).

Additional suggestions for final report of the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators

- Strengthen the role of National Commissions of UNESCO Member States in Asia and the Pacific region, for achieving the EFA goals.
- Rethink the role of youth (especially university or college students), as human resource and partners to implement the EFA goals. *(Note: According to the Summary of Recommendations of the South-East Asia Mid-Term Policy Review Conference, 18-21 February 2008 in Jomtien, Thailand, Policy Recommendation 6 pointed out the potential of the youth and their role in helping to achieve the EFA goals.)*

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