

# World Education Forum

Dakar, Senegal  
26-28 April 2000



# The Dakar Framework for Action

Education for All:  
Meeting our Collective Commitments

Adopted by the World Education Forum  
Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000

Including six regional  
frameworks for action



**The Dakar Framework**

**for Action**

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# Foreword

The World Education Forum (26–28 April 2000, Dakar) adopted the **Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments**. In doing so, its participants reaffirmed the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All adopted ten years earlier (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), annexed to this document.

Welcoming the commitments made by the international community during the 1990s, and particularly the rights-based approach to education supported by the Universal Declaration of Human rights, they collectively committed the world community to achieving education for 'every citizen in every society'. The Dakar Framework for Action is based on the most extensive evaluation of education ever undertaken, the Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment. Called for by the World Conference of Education for All, the Assessment produced a detailed analysis of the state of basic education around the world. Each country assessed its progress towards the goals of Jomtien and reported its findings at six regional conferences in 1999 and 2000:

- ▶ Sub-Saharan Conference on Education for All, Johannesburg, South Africa, 6–10 December 1999;
- ▶ Asia and Pacific Conference on the EFA 2000 Assessment, Bangkok, Thailand, 17–20 January 2000;
- ▶ The Arab Regional Conference on Education for All, Cairo, Egypt, 24–27 January 2000;
- ▶ The Third Inter-Ministerial Review Meeting of the E-9 Countries, Recife, Brazil, 31 January– 2 February 2000;
- ▶ Conference on Education for All in Europe and North America, Warsaw, Poland, 6–8 February 2000; and
- ▶ Regional Education for All Conference in the Americas, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 10–12 February 2000.

The six regional EFA frameworks adopted at these conferences represent an integral part of the Framework for Action, and are therefore part of this document.

The Dakar Framework for Action states that the 'heart of EFA lies at country level'. It also affirms that 'no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources'.

To complement the efforts of national governments, UNESCO, as the lead agency in education, will co-ordinate and mobilize all partners at national, regional and international levels: multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector as well as broad-based civil society organizations.

States should strengthen or develop national plans by 2002 to achieve EFA goals and targets no later than 2015.

Particular emphasis will be given to areas of concern identified at Dakar, such as HIV/AIDS, early childhood education, school health, education of girls and women, adult literacy and education in situations of crisis and emergency.

# Contents

## The Dakar Framework for Action

7

## Expanded Commentary

11

- I. Introduction .....12
- II. Achievements and challenges .....13
- III. Goals .....15
- IV. Strategies .....17

## Regional frameworks for action

23

- Sub-Saharan Africa .....24
- The Americas .....35
- The Arab States .....43
- Asia and the Pacific .....56
- Europe and North America .....63
- E-9 Countries .....69

## World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990

73



# The Dakar Framework for Action

Education for All:  
Meeting Our Collective Commitments

Adopted by the World Education Forum  
Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000



# The Dakar Framework Education For All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments

1. Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, we, the participants in the World Education Forum, commit ourselves to the achievement of education for all (EFA) goals and targets for every citizen and for every society.
2. The Dakar Framework is a collective commitment to action. Governments have an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained. This is a responsibility that will be met most effectively through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by co-operation with regional and international agencies and institutions.
3. We re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990), supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.
4. We welcome the commitments made by the international community to basic education throughout the 1990s, notably at the World Summit for Children (1990), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (1994), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the Mid-Term Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (1996), the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (1997), and the International Conference on Child Labour (1997). The challenge now is to deliver on these commitments.
5. The EFA 2000 Assessment demonstrates that there has been significant progress in many countries. But it is unacceptable in the year 2000 that more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education systems, and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies. Youth and adults are denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in their societies. Without accelerated progress towards education for all, national and internationally agreed targets for poverty reduction will be missed, and inequalities between countries and within societies will widen.
6. Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalization. Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency.
7. We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:
  - (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
  - (ii) 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;
  - (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
  - (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
  - (v) 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;
  - (vi) 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.
8. To achieve these goals, we the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:
  - (i) mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;
  - (ii) promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;
  - (iii) ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;



- (iv) develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;
  - (v) meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict;
  - (vi) implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
  - (vii) implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
  - (viii) create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all;
  - (ix) enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers;
  - (x) harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals;
  - (xi) systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels; and
  - (xii) build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards education for all.
- 9.** Drawing on the evidence accumulated during the national and regional EFA assessments, and building on existing national sector strategies, all States will be requested to develop or strengthen existing national plans of action by 2002 at the latest. These plans should be integrated into a wider poverty reduction and development framework, and should be developed through more transparent and democratic processes, involving stakeholders, especially peoples' representatives, community leaders, parents, learners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. The plans will address problems associated with the chronic under-financing of basic education by establishing budget priorities that reflect a commitment to achieving EFA goals and targets at the earliest possible date, and no later than 2015. They will also set out clear strategies for overcoming the special problems facing those currently excluded from educational opportunities, with a clear commitment to girls' education and gender equity. The plans will give substance and form to the goals and strategies set out in this Framework, and to the commitments made during a succession of international conferences in the 1990s. Regional activities to support national strategies will be based on strengthened regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives.
- 10.** Political will and stronger national leadership are needed for the effective and successful implementation of national plans in each of the countries concerned. However, political

will must be underpinned by resources. The international community acknowledges that many countries currently lack the resources to achieve education for all within an acceptable time-frame. New financial resources, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, must therefore be mobilized by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, including the World Bank and regional development banks, and the private sector. We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.

- 11.** The international community will deliver on this collective commitment by launching with immediate effect a global initiative aimed at developing the strategies and mobilizing the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts. Options to be considered under this initiative will include:
- (i) increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education;
  - (ii) ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance;
  - (iii) facilitating more effective donor co-ordination;
  - (iv) strengthening sector-wide approaches;
  - (v) providing earlier, more extensive and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education; and
  - (vi) undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards EFA goals and targets, including periodic assessments.
- 12.** There is already evidence from many countries of what can be achieved through strong national strategies supported by effective development co-operation. Progress under these strategies could – and must – be accelerated through increased international support. At the same time, countries with less developed strategies – including countries in transition, countries affected by conflict, and post-crisis countries – must be given the support they need to achieve more rapid progress towards education for all.
- 13.** We will strengthen accountable international and regional mechanisms to give clear expression to these commitments and to ensure that the Dakar Framework for Action is on the agenda of every international and regional organization, every national legislature and every local decision-making forum.
- 14.** The EFA 2000 Assessment highlights that the challenge of education for all is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, in South Asia, and in the least developed countries. Accordingly, while no country in need should be denied international assistance, priority should be given to these regions and countries. Countries in conflict or undergoing reconstruction should

also be given special attention in building up their education systems to meet the needs of all learners.

15. Implementation of the preceding goals and strategies will require national, regional and international mechanisms to be galvanized immediately. To be most effective these mechanisms will be participatory and, wherever possible, build on what already exists. They will include representatives of all stakeholders and partners and they will operate in transparent and accountable ways. They will respond comprehensively to the word and spirit of the Jomtien Declaration and this Dakar Framework for Action. The functions of these mechanisms will include, to varying degrees, advocacy, resource mobilization, monitoring, and EFA knowledge generation and sharing.
16. The heart of EFA activity lies at the country level. National EFA Forums will be strengthened or established to support the achievement of EFA. All relevant ministries and national civil society organizations will be systematically represented in these Forums. They should be transparent and democratic and should constitute a framework for implementation at subnational levels. Countries will prepare comprehensive National EFA Plans by 2002 at the latest. For those countries with significant challenges, such as complex crises or natural disasters, special technical support will be provided by the international community. Each National EFA Plan will:
  - (i) be developed by government leadership in direct and systematic consultation with national civil society;
  - (ii) attract co-ordinated support of all development partners;
  - (iii) specify reforms addressing the six EFA goals;
  - (iv) establish a sustainable financial framework;
  - (v) be time-bound and action-oriented;
  - (vi) include mid-term performance indicators; and
  - (vii) achieve a synergy of all human development efforts, through its inclusion within the national development planning framework and process.
17. Where these processes and a credible plan are in place, partner members of the international community undertake to work in a consistent, co-ordinated and coherent manner. Each partner will contribute according to its comparative advantage in support of the National EFA Plans to ensure that resource gaps are filled.
18. Regional activities to support national efforts will be based on existing regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives, augmented where necessary. Regions and subregions will decide on a lead EFA network that will become the Regional or Subregional Forum with an explicit

EFA mandate. Systematic involvement of, and co-ordination with, all relevant civil society and other regional and subregional organizations are essential. These Regional and Subregional EFA Forums will be linked organically with, and be accountable to, National EFA Forums. Their functions will be: co-ordination with all relevant networks; setting and monitoring regional/subregional targets; advocacy; policy dialogue; the promotion of partnerships and technical co-operation; the sharing of best practices and lessons learned; monitoring and reporting for accountability; and promoting resource mobilization. Regional and international support will be available to strengthen Regional and Subregional Forums and relevant EFA capacities, especially within Africa and South Asia.

19. UNESCO will continue its mandated role in co-ordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. In line with this, UNESCO's Director-General will convene annually a high-level, small and flexible group. It will serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization. Informed by a monitoring report from the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and, in particular, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and inputs from Regional and Subregional EFA Forums, it will also be an opportunity to hold the global community to account for commitments made in Dakar. It will be composed of highest-level leaders from governments and civil society of developing and developed countries, and from development agencies.
20. UNESCO will serve as the Secretariat. It will refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work. This will involve working groups on each of the six goals adopted at Dakar. This Secretariat will work closely with other organizations and may include staff seconded from them.
21. Achieving Education for All will require additional financial support by countries and increased development assistance and debt relief for education by bilateral and multilateral donors, estimated to cost in the order of \$8 billion a year. It is therefore essential that new, concrete financial commitments be made by national governments and also by bilateral and multilateral donors including the World Bank and the regional development banks, by civil society and by foundations.

28 April 2000  
Dakar, Senegal

# Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action

## Education For All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments

This commentary provides details on each goal and strategy of the Framework for Action on the basis of the many suggestions provided before and during the World Education Forum, most notably from its twenty-four strategy sessions.



Prepared by  
the World Education Forum Drafting Committee  
Paris, 23 May 2000

## I. Introduction

1. The Dakar Framework for Action is a re-affirmation of the vision set out in the World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien a decade ago. It expresses the international community's collective commitment to pursue a broad-based strategy for ensuring that the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult are met within a generation and sustained thereafter.
2. The World Education Forum in Dakar provided the opportunity to assess the achievements, lessons and failures of the past decade. The EFA 2000 Assessment represents an unparalleled effort to take stock of the state of basic education in the world. It includes national assessments of the progress achieved since Jomtien in 183 countries, the problems encountered and recommendations for future action. Synthesis reports summarize the main findings of these assessments by region. In addition, fourteen special thematic studies were undertaken, surveys were conducted on the quality of learning achievement in over thirty countries, and a comprehensive collection and synthesis of case-studies on the involvement of NGOs in education was prepared.
3. The Assessment is a rich store of information and analysis. Five regional EFA conferences (sub-Saharan Africa, Johannesburg; Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok; Arab States and North Africa, Cairo; the Americas and the Caribbean, Santo Domingo; and Europe and North America, Warsaw) and a conference of the nine high-population (E-9) countries (Recife) discussed and translated the outcomes of the Assessment into regional frameworks for action which are an integral part of this document and underpin the Dakar Framework for Action.
4. The vision of Jomtien remains pertinent and powerful. It provides a broad and comprehensive view of education and its critical role in empowering individuals and transforming societies. Its key points and principles include universal access to learning; a focus on equity; emphasis on learning outcomes; broadening the means and the scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; and strengthening partnerships. Tragically, reality has fallen far short of this vision: millions of people are still denied their right to education and the opportunities it brings to live safer, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives. Such a failure has multiple causes: weak political will, insufficient financial resources and the inefficient use of those available, the burden of debt, inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor and the excluded, a lack of attention to the quality of learning and an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparities. There can be no doubt that the barriers to achieving Education for All are formidable. Yet they can and must be overcome.
5. The Assessment shows that progress has been achieved, proving that Education for All is a realistic and achievable goal. But it needs to be frankly acknowledged that progress has been uneven and far too slow. At the start of a new millennium, the EFA 2000 Assessment shows the following:
  - (i) Of the more than 800 million children under 6 years of age, fewer than a third benefit from any form of early childhood education.
  - (ii) Some 113 million children, 60 per cent of whom are girls, have no access to primary schooling.
  - (iii) At least 880 million adults are illiterate, of whom the majority are women.
6. These figures represent an affront to human dignity and a denial of the right to education. They stand as major barriers to eliminating poverty and attaining sustainable development, and are clearly unacceptable.
7. The Dakar Framework sets six major EFA goals and proposes twelve major strategies. It puts forward twelve major strategies informed by the experience of the past decade and the changing global context. These include the international development targets for education to which national governments and the international community are already committed.
8. Starting from early childhood and extending throughout life, the learners of the twenty-first century will require access to high quality educational opportunities that are responsive to their needs, equitable and gender-sensitive. These opportunities must neither exclude nor discriminate. Since the pace, style, language and circumstances of learning will never be uniform for all, there should be room for diverse formal or less formal approaches, as long as they ensure sound learning and confer equivalent status.
9. The right to education imposes an obligation upon states to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to meet their basic learning needs. Primary education should be free, compulsory and of good quality. The education systems of tomorrow, however diversified they may be, will need to be transparent and accountable in how they are governed, managed and financed. The indispensable role of the state in education must be supplemented and supported by bold and comprehensive educational partnerships at all levels of society. Education for All implies the involvement and commitment of all to education.

## II. Achievements and challenges

### *Achievements and lessons*

10. The EFA 2000 Assessment conducted at national, regional, and global levels shows that progress has been made over the past decade towards the vision reflected in the Jomtien Declaration.
11. Worldwide, primary school enrolments increased by some 82 million pupils since 1990, with 44 million more girls in school in 1998 than in 1990 – figures which more than any other symbolize the serious efforts of many countries to advance in the face of often severe economic constraints and continued rapid population growth. At the end of the 1990s, developing countries as a whole had achieved net enrolment rates in excess of 80 per cent. Repetition and dropout rates had declined. There has been some improvement, albeit limited, in gender equality in primary enrolment in many regions, with the critical exception of sub-Saharan Africa. Early childhood care and education have expanded modestly, mainly in urban areas. Virtually all countries in the world have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and have thereby accepted an obligation to ensure the right of every child to a basic education. There has been a gradual growth in non-formal education and skills training. While levels of illiteracy remain unacceptably high, a measure of progress has been achieved. The overall adult literacy rate has risen to 85 per cent for men and to 74 per cent for women. Increased levels of education have enabled men and women to make more informed choices about family size. This is having an impact on demographic growth rates, a factor of great importance for both education and development.
12. These quantitative achievements tell nothing of the plight of the millions who are still excluded from education or of alienated youth and their painful struggle to find a place and retain their values in changing societies. Information is also sparse on the nature and quality of teaching and learning and of educational outcomes at all levels in education systems.
13. There is a powerful correlation between low enrolment, poor retention and unsatisfactory learning outcomes and the incidence of poverty. Experience in the post-Jomtien decade, however, has demonstrated that significant progress can be made towards the goals of Education for All where there is a strong political commitment, backed by new partnerships with civil society and more strategic support from funding agencies. It is also clear that ensuring that girls and boys benefit equally from education requires nothing less than

the integration of gender equality concerns into the design and implementation of sector policies and strategies. The importance of gathering and carefully analysing reliable gender-disaggregated data at national and subnational levels is evident.

14. The many factors that impinge on the demand for education are now better understood, as are the multiple causes that exclude children, young people and adults from learning opportunities. The range of actions required to increase the participation and retention of girls in school has received widespread attention. Knowledge about the effectiveness of teachers and other educators, the central role of appropriate learning materials, the need for a context-specific mix of 'old' and 'new' technologies, the importance of local languages for initial literacy and the major influence of the community in the life of schools and other education programmes has increased. The value of early childhood care and education for later school success and the need for strong linkages between the different subsectors of education and among basic education, health, nutrition, safe water and the natural environment have received greater attention and are better understood.

### *Challenges and opportunities*

15. The tangible but modest gains overall of the past decade still call for caution. Many countries continue to face the challenges of defining the meaning, purpose and content of basic education in the context of a fast-moving world and of assessing learning outcomes and achievement. Many of the qualitative and informal aspects of education have still not been clearly assessed. The huge diversity of contexts makes performance and achievements difficult to measure and compare. Moreover, growing educational disparities within and between countries are a matter for serious concern.
16. Many governments and agencies have focused their efforts on the easy to reach and they have neglected those excluded from a basic education, whether for social, economic or geographic reasons. What is clear is that quality must not suffer as access expands and that improvements in quality should not benefit the economically well-off at the expense of the poor, as has happened, for example, in the expansion of early childhood care and education.
17. The education of girls remains a major challenge: despite the international attention that it has received, 60 per cent of all children without access to primary education are girls.
18. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where progress has been most difficult to achieve, clearly present a much deeper challenge than world averages imply and will require particular attention if the goals of Education for All are to

be reached in each and every country. In the Americas and the Caribbean, deep differences between regions and social groups based on income inequality continue to hamper progress towards Education for All and must receive due attention.

19. A key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All must encompass not only primary education, but also early childhood education, literacy and life-skills programmes. Using both formal and non-formal approaches, it must take account of the needs of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs. It is encouraging to see that many governments, funding agencies and civil society organizations are increasingly rallying to this more inclusive and comprehensive view of education.
20. Ensuring that Education for All is provided with adequate, equitable and sustainable resources is the foremost challenge. Many governments do not give education sufficient priority in their national budgets. Too many do not use resources for education effectively and efficiently, and often subsidize better-off groups at the expense of the poor. At the same time, stabilization programmes often fail to protect education budgets. As a direct consequence, user charges continue to be a major deterrent to poor children attending school and to young people and adults in need of non-formal learning. In some countries, passing the cost burden on to poor parents has had a devastating impact on enrolment and retention. Education must neither exclude nor discriminate. Every government has the responsibility to provide free, quality basic education, so that no child will be denied access because of an inability to pay.
21. Governments need to explore more actively alternative and innovative ways of increasing the resources available to support Education for All and to develop clearly defined strategies for achieving EFA goals, for which they take real and sustained ownership. Debt relief to the poorest countries remains inadequate, with too little being provided to too few countries too late. Debt reduction programmes should offer governments an opportunity to give priority to education within overall poverty reduction frameworks.
22. While the proportion of international assistance allocated to basic education increased in the 1990s, there was an overall decline in total development assistance. The first trend should be supported and the second reversed. There is considerable scope for the international community to demon-

strate, in a co-operative and accountable way, that it can be effective in supporting well-defined national sector strategies and in helping to release the significant additional resources that many funding agencies are willing to provide.

23. New ways of working that are emerging within the wider development context also represent opportunities for achieving EFA goals. Greater co-operation between national and international agencies at the country level, through structures and mechanisms such as Comprehensive Development Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, offers the potential for resource-related partnerships for basic education.
24. Genuinely participatory development is more likely to occur where there is a stronger and more vocal recognition of education as a fundamental human right and where representative democracy has taken root. The growing importance of participatory poverty assessments and household surveys also highlights a positive trend in the development of education programmes and systems that are genuinely responsive to well-defined needs and priorities.
25. While inadequate institutional capacity and weak political processes still prevent many governments from responding to the priorities of their citizens, the spread of democratic principles around the world, the growing contribution of civil society to democratic processes, the fight against corruption and the process of decentralization that is ongoing in many countries all have the potential to contribute greatly to building a solid foundation for the achievement of effective, equitable and sustainable Education for All.
26. Globalization is both an opportunity and a challenge. It is a process which must be shaped and managed so as to ensure equity and sustainability. Globalization is generating new wealth and resulting in the greater interconnectedness and interdependence of economies and societies. Driven by the revolution in information technologies and the increased mobility of capital, it has the potential to help reduce poverty and inequality throughout the world, and to harness the new technologies for basic education. Yet globalization carries with it the danger of creating a market place in knowledge that excludes the poor and the disadvantaged. Countries and households denied access to opportunities for basic education in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy face the prospect of deepening marginalization within an increasingly prosperous international economy.
27. The threat posed by HIV/AIDS to the achievement of EFA goals and to development more broadly, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, presents an enormous challenge. The terrifying impact of HIV/AIDS on educational demand, supply

and quality requires explicit and immediate attention in national policy-making and planning. Programmes to control and reduce the spread of the virus must make maximum use of education's potential to transmit messages on prevention and to change attitudes and behaviours.

- 28.** The significant growth of tensions, conflict and war, both within nations and between nations and peoples, is a cause of great concern. Education has a key role to play in preventing conflict in the future and building lasting peace and stability.

### III. Goals

*Basic learning needs . . . comprise both essential learning tools . . . and the basic learning content . . . required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.*

(World Declaration on Education for All,  
Article 1, Paragraph 1)

- 29.** The goals and strategies set out below establish a Framework for Action that is designed to enable all individuals to realize their right to learn and to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the development of their society. They are global in nature, drawn from the outcomes of the regional EFA conferences and the international development targets to which countries are already committed. Individual countries, through a process of consultation among all stakeholders in education and with the assistance of the wider international community and EFA follow-up mechanisms, should set their own goals, intermediate targets and time-lines within existing or new national education plans.

#### **1** Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

- 30.** All young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environments that allow them to become healthy, alert and secure and be able to learn. The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality early childhood care and education, both in families and in more structured programmes, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive, focusing on all of the

child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psycho-social development. They should be provided in the child's mother tongue and help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities and families can help ensure the provision of good care and education for children, especially for those most disadvantaged, through activities centred on the child, focused on the family, based within the community and supported by national, multi-sectoral policies and adequate resources.

- 31.** Governments, through relevant ministries, have the primary responsibility of formulating early childhood care and education policies within the context of national EFA plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programmes for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal school systems. The education of parents and other caregivers in better child care, building on traditional practices, and the systematic use of early childhood indicators, are important elements in achieving this 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

- 32.** All children must have the opportunity to fulfil their right to quality education in schools or alternative programmes at whatever level of education is considered 'basic'. All states must fulfil their obligation to offer free and compulsory primary education in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international commitments. The international agreement on the 2015 target date for achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) in all countries will require commitment and political will from all levels of government. For the millions of children living in poverty, who suffer multiple disadvantages, there must be an unequivocal commitment that education be free of tuition and other fees, and that everything possible be done to reduce or eliminate costs such as those for learning materials, uniforms, school meals and transport. Wider social policies, interventions and incentives should be used to mitigate indirect opportunity costs of attending school. No one should be denied the opportunity to complete a good quality primary education because it is unaffordable. Child labour must not stand in the way of education. The inclusion of children with special needs, from disadvantaged ethnic minorities and migrant populations, from remote and isolated communities and from urban slums, and others

excluded from education, must be an integral part of strategies to achieve UPE by 2015.

- 33.** While commitment to attaining universal enrolment is essential, improving and sustaining the quality of basic education is equally important in ensuring effective learning outcomes. In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly, providing relevant content in an accessible and appealing format. Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners. The EFA 2000 Assessment suggests a wide range of ways in which schools can respond to the needs of their pupils, including affirmative action programmes for girls that seek to remove the obstacles to their enrolment, bilingual education for the children of ethnic minorities, and a range of imaginative and diverse approaches to address and actively engage children who are not enrolled in school.

### **3** Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes

- 34.** All young people and adults must be given the opportunity to gain the knowledge and develop the values, attitudes and skills that will enable them to develop their capacities to work, to participate fully in their society, to take control of their own lives and to continue learning. No country can be expected to develop into a modern and open economy without a certain proportion of its work force having completed secondary education. In most countries this requires an expansion of the secondary system.
- 35.** Young people, especially adolescent girls, face risks and threats that limit learning opportunities and challenge education systems. These include exploitative labour, the lack of employment, conflict and violence, drug abuse, school-age pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Youth-friendly programmes must be made available to provide the information, skills, counselling and services needed to protect them from these risks.
- 36.** All young people should be given the opportunity for on-going education. For those who drop out of school or complete school without acquiring the literacy, numeracy and life skills they need, there must be a range of options for continuing their learning. Such opportunities should be both meaningful and relevant to their environment and needs, help them become active agents in shaping their future and develop useful work-related skills.

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

- 37.** All adults have a right to basic education, beginning with literacy, which allows them to engage actively in, and to transform, the world in which they live. There are still some 880 million people who cannot read or write in the world; two-thirds are women. The fragile levels of literacy acquired by many new literates compound the problem. Yet the education of adults remains isolated, often at the periphery of national education systems and budgets.

- 38.** Adult and continuing education must be greatly expanded and diversified, and integrated into the mainstream of national education and poverty reduction strategies. The vital role literacy plays in lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, good health, active citizenship and the improved quality of life for individuals, communities and societies must be more widely recognized. Literacy and continuing education are essential for women's empowerment and gender equality. Closer linkages among formal, non-formal and informal approaches to learning must be fostered to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of adults.

- 39.** Sufficient resources, well-targeted literacy programmes, better trained teachers and the innovative use of technologies are essential in promoting these activities. The scaling up of practical, participatory learning methodologies developed by non-government organizations, which link literacy with empowerment and local development, is especially important. The success of adult education efforts in the next decade will be essentially demonstrated by substantial reduction in disparities between male/female and urban/rural literacy rates.

### **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

- 40.** Gender-based discrimination remains one of the most intractable constraints to realizing the right to education. Without overcoming this obstacle, Education for All cannot be achieved. Girls are a majority among out-of-school children and youth, although in an increasing number of countries boys are at a disadvantage. Even though the edu-



cation of girls and women has a powerful trans-generational effect and is a key determinant of social development and women's empowerment, limited progress has been made in increasing girls' participation in basic education.

- 41.** International agreement has already been reached to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. This requires that gender issues be mainstreamed throughout the education system, supported by adequate resources and strong political commitment. Merely ensuring access to education for girls is not enough; unsafe school environments and biases in teacher behaviour and training, teaching and learning processes, and curricula and textbooks often lead to lower completion and achievement rates for girls. By creating safe and gender-sensitive learning environments, it should be possible to remove a major hurdle to girls' participation in education. Increasing levels of women's literacy is another crucial factor in promoting girls' education. Comprehensive efforts therefore need to be made at all levels and in all areas to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote mutual respect between girls and boys, women and men. To make this possible, changes in attitudes, values and behaviour are required.

**6** Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

- 42.** Quality is at the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living.
- 43.** Evidence over the past decade has shown that efforts to expand enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to enhance educational quality if children are to be attracted to school, stay there and achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Scarce resources have frequently been used for expanding systems with insufficient attention to quality improvement in areas such as teacher training and materials development. Recent assessments of learning achievement in some countries have shown that a sizeable percentage of children is acquiring only a fraction of the knowledge and skills they are expected to master. What students are meant to learn has often not been clearly defined, well-taught or accurately assessed.

- 44.** Governments and all other EFA partners must work together to ensure basic education of quality for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language or ethnic origin. Successful education programmes require: (1) healthy, well-nourished and motivated students; (2) well-trained teachers and active learning techniques; (3) adequate facilities and learning materials; (4) a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; (5) an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe; (6) a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values; (7) participatory governance and management; and (8) respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures.

## IV. Strategies

- 45.** Education for All is a basic human right at the heart of development. It must be a national and international priority, and it requires a strong and sustained political commitment, enhanced financial allocations and the participation of all EFA partners in the processes of policy design, strategic planning and the implementation of programmes. Achieving the six goals outlined above necessitates a broad-based approach which extends well beyond the confines of formal education systems. Building on the lessons of the last decade, the implementation of the following strategies will be critical in achieving Education for All.

**1** Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for Education for All, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education

- 46.** The Jomtien Framework for Action stated that progress in meeting the basic learning needs of all will depend ultimately on the actions taken within individual countries. This means first that governments must make firm political commitments and allocate sufficient resources to all components of basic education – an absolutely essential step to meeting the state's obligation to all of its citizens. In many countries this will require increasing the share of national income and budgets allocated to education and, within that, to basic education, balanced by reduced allocations to sectors of lower development priority. Resources have to be used with much greater efficiency and integrity, and governments should set goals for more equitable spending across education sub-sectors. Corruption is a major drain on

the effective use of resources for education and should be drastically curbed. Structures are needed to enable civil society to be part of transparent and accountable budgeting and financing systems. Achieving Education for All will also require more creative and sustained mobilization of resources from other parts of society, including different levels of government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

- 47.** Even with improved mobilization and allocation of domestic resources, and enhanced efficiency in their use, meeting all the education goals will require additional funding from international development agencies. Funding agencies should allocate a larger share of their resources to support primary and other forms of basic education. The regions and countries where challenges are greatest, which include much of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, least developed countries and countries emerging from conflict, deserve particular attention.
- 48.** No countries seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources. Funding agencies are willing to allocate significant resources towards Education for All. The keys to releasing these resources are evidence of, or potential for, sustained political commitment; effective and transparent mechanisms for consultation with civil society organizations in developing, implementing and monitoring EFA plans; and a well-defined, consultative processes for sector planning and management.
- 49.** This commitment requires that funding agencies coordinate their efforts to provide flexible development assistance within the framework of sectorwide reforms and support sector priorities within sound and coherent government-owned poverty reduction programmes. High priority should be given to providing earlier, deeper and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education. Debt relief should not be a substitute for aid.
- 50.** Funding agencies will need to make longer-term and more predictable commitments, and to be more accountable and transparent. They must provide timely and accurate information on their disbursements, and ensure that there is regular reporting at regional and international levels.

## **2** Promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies

- 51.** Education, starting with the care and education of young children and continuing through lifelong learning, is central to individual empowerment, the elimination of poverty at household and community level, and broader social and economic development. At the same time, the reduction of poverty facilitates progress toward basic education goals. There are evident synergies between strategies for promoting education and those for reducing poverty that must be exploited both in programme planning and implementation.
- 52.** A multi-sectoral approach to poverty elimination requires that education strategies complement those of the productive sectors as well as of health, population, social welfare, labour, the environment and finance, and be closely linked with civil society. Specific actions in this regard include: (1) integrating basic education strategies into broader national and international poverty alleviation measures such as United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), Comprehensive Development Frameworks and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; and (2) developing 'inclusive' education systems which explicitly identify, target and respond flexibly to the needs and circumstances of the poorest and the most marginalized.

## **3** Ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development

- 53.** Learners, teachers, parents, communities, non-governmental organizations and other bodies representing civil society must be granted new and expanded political and social scope, at all levels of society, in order to engage governments in dialogue, decision-making and innovation around the goals of basic education. Civil society has much experience and a crucial role to play in identifying barriers to EFA goals, and developing policies and strategies to remove them.
- 54.** Such participation, especially at the local level through partnerships between schools and communities, should not only be limited to endorsing decisions of, or financing programmes designed by, the state. Rather, at all levels of decision-making, governments must put in place regular mechanisms for dialogue that will enable citizens and civil society organizations to contribute to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of basic education. This is essential in order to

foster the development of accountable, comprehensive and flexible educational management frameworks. In order to facilitate this process, capacity will often have to be developed in the civil society organizations.

#### 4 Develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management

55. The experience of the past decade has underscored the need for better governance of education systems in terms of efficiency, accountability, transparency and flexibility so that they can respond more effectively to the diverse and continuously changing needs of learners. Reform of educational management is urgently needed – to move from highly centralized, standardized and command-driven forms of management to more decentralized and participatory decision-making, implementation and monitoring at lower levels of accountability. These processes must be buttressed by a management information system that benefits from both new technologies and community participation to produce timely, relevant and accurate information.

56. Country EFA reports and regional action frameworks stemming from the EFA 2000 Assessment recommend the following: (1) establish better regulatory frameworks and administrative mechanisms for managing not only formal and non-formal primary education, but also early childhood, youth and adult education programmes; (2) more sharply delineate responsibilities among different levels of government; (3) ensure that decentralization does not lead to inequitable distribution of resources; (4) make more efficient use of existing human and financial resources; (5) improve capacities for managing diversity, disparity and change; (6) integrate programmes within education and strengthen their convergence with those of other sectors, especially health, labour and social welfare; and (7) provide training for school leaders and other education personnel.

#### 5 Meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict

57. Conflicts, instability and natural disasters take their toll on education and are a major barrier towards attaining Education for All. The capacity of governments and civil society should be enhanced to rapidly assess educational needs in contexts of crisis and post-conflict situations for children and adults, to restore learning opportunities in secure and

friendly environments, and to reconstruct destroyed or damaged education systems.

58. Schools should be respected and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace. Education programmes should be designed to promote the full development of the human personality and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26). Such programmes should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, and all ethnic and religious groups; and they should be sensitive to cultural and linguistic identities, and respectful of diversity and reinforce a culture of peace. Education should promote not only skills such as the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict, but also social and ethical values.

#### 6 Implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education that recognize the need for change in attitudes, values and practices

59. Achieving Education for All demands that high-level commitment and priority be given to gender equality. Schools, other learning environments and education systems usually mirror the larger society. Efforts in support of gender equality must include specific actions to address discrimination resulting from social attitudes and practices, economic status and culture.

60. Throughout the education system, there must be a commitment to the development of attitudes and behaviours that incorporate gender awareness and analysis. Education systems must also act explicitly to remove gender bias. This includes ensuring that policies and their implementation are supportive of girls' and boys' learning. Teaching and supervisory bodies must be fair and transparent, and rules and regulations, including promotion and disciplinary action, must have equal impact on girls and boys, women and men. Attention must be given to boys' needs in cases where they are disadvantaged.

61. In the learning environment, the content, processes and context of education must be free of gender bias, and encourage and support equality and respect. This includes teachers' behaviours and attitudes, curriculum and textbooks, and student interactions. Efforts must be made to ensure personal security: girls are often especially vulnerable to abuse and harassment on the journey to and from school and at school.

## 7 Implement education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a matter of urgency

- 62.** The HIV/AIDS pandemic is undermining progress towards Education for All in many parts of the world by seriously affecting educational demand, supply and quality. This situation requires the urgent attention of governments, civil society and the international community. Education systems must go through significant changes if they are to survive the impact of HIV/AIDS and counter its spread, especially in response to the impact on teacher supply and student demand. To achieve EFA goals will necessitate putting HIV/AIDS as the highest priority in the most affected countries, with strong, sustained political commitment; mainstreaming HIV/AIDS perspectives in all aspects of policy; redesigning teacher training and curricula; and significantly enhancing resources to these efforts.
- 63.** The decade has shown that the pandemic has had, and will increasingly have, a devastating effect on education systems, teachers and learners, with a particularly adverse impact on girls. Stigma and poverty brought about by HIV/AIDS are creating new social castes of children excluded from education and adults with reduced livelihood opportunities. A rights-based response to HIV/AIDS mitigation and ongoing monitoring impact of the pandemic on EFA goals are essential. This response should include appropriate legislation and administrative actions to ensure the right of HIV/AIDS-affected people to receive education and to combat discrimination within the education sector.
- 64.** Education institutions and structures should create a safe and supportive environment for children and young people in a world with HIV/AIDS, and strengthen their protection from sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation. Flexible non-formal approaches should be adopted to reach children and adults infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, with particular attention to AIDS orphans. Curricula based on life-skills approaches should include all aspects of HIV/AIDS care and prevention. Parents and communities should also benefit from HIV/AIDS-related programmes. Teachers must be adequately trained, both in-service and pre-service, in providing HIV/AIDS education, and teachers affected by the pandemic should be supported at all levels.

## 8 Create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all

- 65.** The quality of learning is and must be at the heart of EFA. All stakeholders – teachers and students, parents and community members, health workers and local government

officials – should work together to develop environments conducive to learning. To offer education of good quality, educational institutions and programmes should be adequately and equitably resourced, with the core requirements of safe, environmentally friendly and easily accessible facilities; well motivated and professionally competent teachers; and books, other learning materials and technologies that are context specific, cost effective and available to all learners.

- 66.** Learning environments should also be healthy, safe and protective. This should include: (1) adequate water and sanitation facilities, (2) access to or linkages with health and nutrition services, (3) policies and codes of conducts that enhance the physical, psycho-social and emotional health of teachers and learners, and (4) education content and practices leading to knowledge, attitudes, values, and life skills needed for self-esteem, good health, and personal safety.
- 67.** There is an urgent need to adopt effective strategies to identify and include the socially, culturally and economically excluded. This requires participatory analysis of exclusion at household, community and school levels, and the development of diverse, flexible, and innovative approaches to learning and an environment that fosters mutual respect and trust.
- 68.** Assessment of learning should include an evaluation of environments, processes and outcomes. Learning outcomes must be well-defined in both cognitive and non-cognitive domains, and be continually assessed as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

## 9 Enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers

- 69.** Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in schools or in more flexible community-based programmes; they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change. No education reform is likely to succeed without the active participation and ownership of teachers. Teachers at all levels of the education system should be respected and adequately remunerated; have access to training and ongoing professional development and support, including through open and distance learning; and be able to participate, locally and nationally, in decisions affecting their professional lives and teaching environments. Teachers must also accept their professional responsibilities and be accountable to both learners and communities.
- 70.** Clearly defined and more imaginative strategies to identify, attract, train and retain good teachers must be put into place. These strategies should address the new role of teachers in

preparing students for an emerging knowledge-based and technology-driven economy. Teachers must be able to understand diversity in learning styles and in the physical and intellectual development of students, and to create stimulating, participatory learning environments.

## **10** Harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals

- 71.** Information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be harnessed to support EFA goals at an affordable cost. These technologies have great potential for knowledge dissemination, effective learning and the development of more efficient education services. This potential will not be realized unless the new technologies serve rather than drive the implementation of education strategies. To be effective, especially in developing countries, ICTs should be combined with more traditional technologies such as books and radios, and be more extensively applied to the training of teachers.
- 72.** The swiftness of ICT developments, their increasing spread and availability, the nature of their content and their declining prices are having major implications for learning. They may tend to increase disparities, weaken social bonds and threaten cultural cohesion. Governments will therefore need to establish clearer policies in regard to science and technology, and undertake critical assessments of ICT experiences and options. These should include their resource implications in relation to the provision of basic education, emphasizing choices that bridge the 'digital divide', increase access and quality, and reduce inequity.
- 73.** There is a need to tap the potential of ICTs to enhance data collection and analysis, and to strengthen management systems, from central ministries through sub-national levels to the school; to improve access to education by remote and disadvantaged communities; to support initial and continuing professional development of teachers; and to provide opportunities to communicate across classrooms and cultures.
- 74.** News media should also be engaged to create and strengthen partnerships with education systems, through the promotion of local newspapers, informed coverage of education issues and continuing education programmes via public service broadcasting.

## **11** Systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels

- 75.** Achieving EFA goals requires setting priorities, defining policies, establishing targets and progress indicators, allocating resources, monitoring performance, and assessing qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Robust and reliable education statistics, disaggregated and based on accurate census data, are essential if progress is to be properly measured, experience shared and lessons learned. Information on the success of particular strategies, on national and international budget allocations for basic education and on civil society participation in Education for All must also be sought. These are all key elements in assessing the accountability of EFA partners. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of EFA, with the full participation of civil society, should be encouraged.
- 76.** When governments are truly committed to educational outcomes, they recognize the fundamental importance of statistics and the need for credible and independent institutions to produce them. The EFA 2000 Assessment identified the existence of important data gaps. Capacity should be increased to fill these gaps, and to produce accurate and timely data, qualitative and quantitative, for analysis and feed-back to policy-makers and practitioners. Attention to collecting disaggregated data at lower levels of the system, both to identify areas of greatest inequity and to provide data for local-level planning, management and evaluation, is essential.
- 77.** Progress towards meeting EFA goals and targets needs to be assessed regularly and systematically to allow for meaningful comparative analyses. The availability of better data at national and international levels will allow governments, civil society and other agencies to gain a clearer understanding of progress toward the goals, to identify regions, countries, and sub-national levels where there is particular success or difficulty, and then to take appropriate action.

## **12** Build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards Education for All

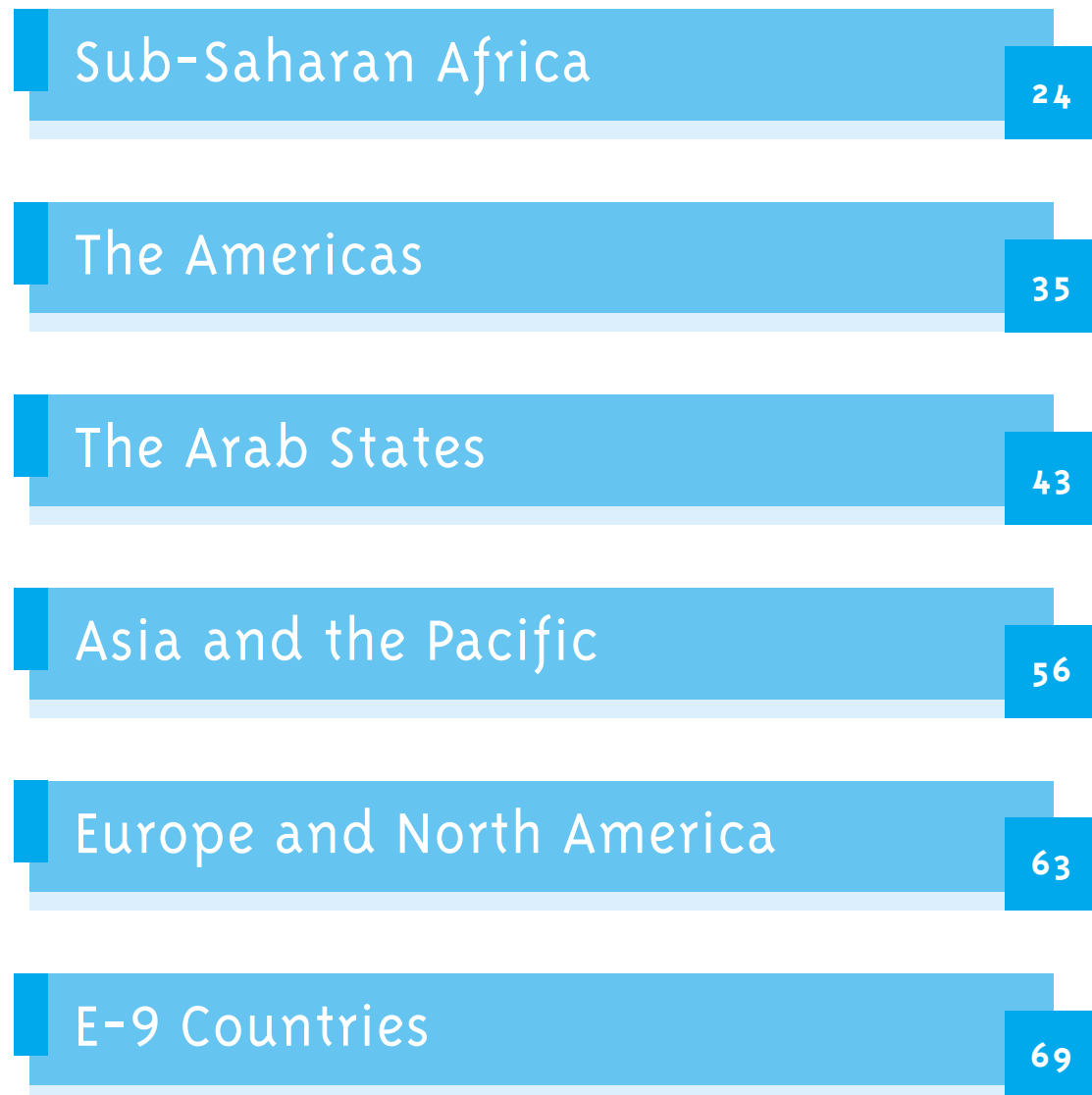
- 78.** In order to realize the six goals presented in this Framework for Action, broad-based and participatory mechanisms at international, regional and national levels are essential. The functions of these mechanisms will include, to varying degrees, advocacy, resource mobilization, monitoring, and knowledge generation and sharing.

**79.** The heart of EFA activity lies at the country level. National EFA forums will be strengthened or established and countries will prepare national EFA plans by 2002 at the latest. For those countries with significant challenges such as crises or natural disasters, special technical support will be provided by the international community. Members of the international community commit themselves to working in a consistent, co-ordinated and coherent manner in supporting national EFA plans.

**80.** Regional and sub-regional activities to support national efforts will be based on existing organizations, networks and initiatives, augmented where necessary. These will work in tandem with national EFA forums.

**81.** UNESCO will continue its mandated role in co-ordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. In line with this, UNESCO will convene annually a high-level, small and flexible group to serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization. It will be composed of leaders from governments and civil society and development agencies. UNESCO will refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work.

**82.** Achieving Education for All will require that new, concrete financial commitments be made by national governments and by bilateral and multilateral donors including the World Bank and the regional development banks, civil society and foundations. ■





Education for All  
A Framework for Action  
in Sub-Saharan Africa:  
Education for African Renaissance  
in the Twenty-first Century

Adopted by the Regional Conference on Education for All  
for Sub-Saharan Africa  
Johannesburg, South Africa, 6-10 December 1999





# I. Preamble

If the next century is going to be characterized as a truly African century, for social and economic progress of the African people, the century of durable peace and sustained development in Africa, then the success of this project is dependent on the success of our education systems. For nowhere in the world has sustained development been attained without a well-functioning system of education, without universal and sound primary education, without an effective higher education and research sector, without equality of educational opportunity.

President Thabo Mbeki, Opening Speech, Conference on Education for African Renaissance in the Twenty-first Century, Johannesburg, South Africa, 6 December 1999.

At the close of the twentieth century, we, the Ministers of Education, representatives of civil society and international development agencies, assembled in Johannesburg to reflect on the progress made towards achieving the EFA goals adopted in Jomtien in 1990. We seize this opportunity to launch a renewal of education that will enable Africa to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. We hereby adopt a framework of action under the theme of *Education for African Renaissance in the Globalized Economy, Communication and Culture*.

We recognize the tremendous efforts made by sub-Saharan African countries to achieve these goals, despite many obstacles and exceptionally harsh conditions. This meeting of major stakeholders from across the continent has enabled us for the first time to analyse the situation from many perspectives. During this decade, the greatest achievements have accompanied comprehensive reform and post-war reconstruction. The greatest losses have been in those countries engaged in war and civil conflict that have engulfed nearly one-third of the countries in the region.

Built often on a weak physical and institutional base, education systems in many African countries are vulnerable to natural and human-made disasters that have hindered progress and, in some cases, even rolled back the achievements already won. Many countries have experienced austere economic adjustment programmes, an increased debt burden, a skewed global economic system, poor governance, inadequate and sometimes poorly used resources, as well as drought and floods. These factors, combined with impact of HIV/AIDS and armed conflict, have continued to have devastating effects on education in Africa.

Remarkable efforts have been made to ensure that every child gets access to quality basic education, but we note that only about ten countries have achieved universal primary education. Although enrolment has increased considerably in many countries, it has not been adequate to accommodate rapid population growth and rural-to-urban migration, thereby giving an impression of being static relative to population size. Early childhood care and education programmes are limited to the few in the urban areas. Based on countries' own estimates, between 1990 and 1998 the net enrolment of boys increased by 9 per cent to 56 per cent, and of girls by 7 per cent to 48 per cent<sup>1</sup> in sub-Saharan Africa. However, these figures mask considerable regional variations. In countries of the Indian Ocean, both girls and boys attained over 70 per cent net enrolment. The most outstanding progress in terms of percentage increase of boys' enrolment was in East Africa (excluding Somalia), where the net enrolment of boys increased by 27 per cent (to 60 per cent) and of girls by 18 per cent (to 50 per cent), and for girls in Southern Africa, where the comparable figures for girls were 23 per cent (to 76 per cent) and for boys, 16 per cent (to 58 per cent).<sup>2</sup> Progress in the peaceful areas of West and Central Africa was counter-balanced by disastrous reversals in the warring countries. Currently available data indicate that about 40 per cent of girls and 50 per cent of boys are enrolled in West Africa, and 50 per cent of girls and 60 per cent of boys in Central Africa. The real figures may be much lower, however, as several of these countries were unable to collect data in recent years.

Girls represent 56 per cent of the estimated 41 million school-age children who are out of school. Gender parity is highest in Southern Africa, where many countries have attained near universal primary education and high adult literacy. Cases of extreme gender disparity, where girls' enrolment may be only half that of boys, are mostly found along the southern rim of the Sahara, a region characterized by low adult literacy and weak economies. Having entered school, however, girls have a 69 per cent chance of reaching Grade 5, compared with 70 per cent for boys. Here also, regional variations exist: in general, where enrolment and literacy are high, gender equality prevails; where enrolment and adult literacy are low, the survival rate of girls is generally lower than that of boys.

The number of students dropping out of school has increased alarmingly in recent years, mainly due to increased costs or armed conflicts. Participation is particularly low amongst children in remote and rural areas, those with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced people, working children, ethnic

<sup>1</sup> Using United Nations' population estimates, net enrolment of boys increased by 10 per cent to 67 per cent and girls by 8 per cent to 58 per cent in 1998. The difference is due to the assumed population growth rates used in the inter-census projections. The United Nations' estimates are generally lower than the countries' own estimations, in the case of the net enrolment, by nearly 10 per cent for boys and girls respectively.

<sup>2</sup> The lower enrolment of boys in this region is due to differences in opportunity costs in countries where mining industries recruit largely uneducated male labour.

minorities, and those affected by HIV/AIDS, conflict and other emergencies that have spawned an increasing number of orphans. The poor from rural areas continue to stream into our cities, where schools are already overcrowded.

Access to education is limited, its quality poor and the curricula often irrelevant to the needs of the learners and of social, cultural and economic development. Emerging new industries need entrepreneurs, managers and skilled labour in order to be competitive; our outdated education systems continue to produce graduates without the requisite knowledge and skills.

The majority of our population still has no access to electricity, clean water and medicine. To solve these shortages, we need the 'know-how' in such basic industrial processes as product development, manufacturing, marketing and distribution. Educational institutions, research centres and industries, working together, could develop indigenous solutions to these problems. The trust needed for this partnership between education and industry, however, is at an all-time low.

Having partaken in the most comprehensive assessment ever conducted in Africa, we recognize the important tasks ahead for education leadership and management. We need to build our capacity for innovation, sensitivity to disparities and flexible responsiveness to changing needs. Education planning and management capacity, however, remains largely underdeveloped. Yet, many African ministry staff have been trained abroad particularly in these areas. We need to effectively implement planned changes as well as respond to crisis and manage adjustment. For this, we need to establish a mechanism for professional partnership and a democratic process for consensus-building with regard to the goals and strategies at various levels, from policy formulation to implementation.

To meet these challenges, it is all the more important to learn from the many examples of good practice and successful policies that have proven to be effective in the African context:

- ▶ accelerated access, with particular reference to policies of equity and female enrolment, including affirmative action;
- ▶ community involvement in school decision-making and administration;
- ▶ employment of teachers in their own community of origin;
- ▶ curriculum reform toward locally relevant subjects;
- ▶ affordable teaching materials and textbooks;
- ▶ use of mother tongue as the language of instruction;
- ▶ the use of schools as community learning centres;
- ▶ evaluation based on an action-research-action paradigm;
- ▶ management/statistical information systems in planning, evaluation, etc.

The resounding success of the EFA 2000 Assessment exercise, in which virtually all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa participated, also demonstrates the potential for partnership between Africa-based organizations, institutions and experts. We shall apply a critical analysis of past successes and failures to the formulation of our future strategies.

We are more convinced than ever that education is the *sine qua non* for empowering the people of Africa to participate in and benefit more effectively from the opportunities available in the globalized economy of the twenty-first century. Our optimism reflects the recent political progress and increased investment in education in parts of Africa and the opportunities offered by new information and communication technologies. With its nation-wide infrastructure and staff specialized in teaching and the design of teaching-learning materials, the education sector shall also address the urgent social issues as HIV/AIDS and violence that are threatening our progress and prospects.

Reflecting on the ten years since the Jomtien Declaration and the four years since the Amman Mid-Term Review, we realize, however, that a fundamental paradigm shift and an ever greater investment in education are essential for achieving our vision of the African Renaissance.

The above being the case, we, Ministers of Education, representatives of civil society and international development agencies:

**Reaffirm** that education is a basic right and a basic need for all African children, youth and adults, including those with disabilities, as recognized in the international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recommendations of the Salamanca Conference;

**Recognize** that investment in quality education is a prerequisite for the empowerment of Africans to fully participate in and benefit from a globalized economy and modern communications technology;

**Acknowledge** that the provision of basic education must be transformed for inclusiveness, relevance and gender responsiveness and that efforts to improve the participation of girls and women in education, including affirmative action, must be intensified;

**Commit** ourselves to removing all barriers (social, cultural, economic, political and legal) that hinder African children, youth and adults from having access to quality education and the attainment of the goals of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All;

**Recognize** that the HIV/AIDS pandemic, increased poverty, war and civil strife are major hindrances to the achievement of EFA goals, and thus must be taken as priority areas of focus in the region;

**Recognize** the necessity of education systems to provide all African people with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge essential for access and use of information and communication technology;

**Recognize** that African indigenous knowledge systems, languages and values should be the foundation for the development of African education systems; and

**Recognize** the necessity for curriculum transformation to give children, youth and adults the type of quality education that promotes appreciation of diversity, richness and dynamism of our cultures, with a goal to liberate us from psychological, economic and technological dependency.

Having sharpened our vision by this insight, we shall design our policies and programmes, and mobilize partnerships and resources for the realization of African Renaissance in the twenty-first century.

## 2. The new vision of African Renaissance

We envision the resurgence of a vibrant Africa, rich in its cultural diversity, history, languages and arts, standing united to end its marginalization in world progress and development. A democratic Africa, triumphant over colonialism, apartheid and oppression. A peaceful Africa, having beaten its swords into ploughshares, and respecting the human rights of all, irrespective of colour, gender, ethnicity, religion or abilities. An enlightened Africa, victorious in its struggle for the liberation of the mind. A prosperous Africa, where the knowledge and the skills of its people are its foremost resource. We envision Africa finally integrated in its political, economic and social systems, in pursuit of peace, justice, prosperity and a better life for all.

Our vision seeks, not a nostalgic return to pre-colonialism, but an advance of our cultural heritage. The values that unite us and the knowledge of our own environment, combined with modern management, social and physical sciences and technology, shall be applied to solving the chronic problems of poverty, disease, famine, conflict, misrule and corruption.

Education shall prepare people to take control of their own destiny, liberating them from dependency and endowing them with initiative, creativity, critical thinking, enterprise,

democratic values, pride and appreciation of diversity. The new Africa will respect the human rights of each individual and demand good governance and accountability. A new social cohesion will resist the forces of violence and division. Access to education will no longer be affected by gender, colour, tribe, ethnic origin, social status, physical and mental ability, religious persuasion or political belief.

It shall be the collective responsibility of government, civil society and development partners at all levels to create dynamic learning organizations with a clear mission for social, economic and cultural development. The education and training sector shall become an integrated system managing knowledge and human resources development.

Toward the realization of this vision, we are working co-operatively in the area of education. We are cementing African unity and engaging in a continental offensive for African social, economic and cultural development – in short, for African Renaissance.

## 3. Priority areas of focus

Education systems shall provide lifelong learning opportunities to all, focusing on the learner and the learning process. Safe and inspiring learning environments will enable families and individuals to develop their critical thinking and creativity and realize their full potential. The major areas of focus are access and equity, quality and relevance, capacity building and partnerships:

### 3.1 Improving access and equity

- ▶ Review and develop educational and other policies and legislation within the framework of the African renaissance;
- ▶ Mobilize resources for restructuring and reallocation of government finances with a view to strengthening basic education;
- ▶ Develop closer co-operation between central and local government, schools, communities and families to facilitate school ownership, sustainability and accessibility;
- ▶ Pay special attention to street and working children, nomadic communities, children in remote environments and areas of conflict, minority groups, HIV/AIDS orphans, child prisoners and disabled children;
- ▶ Expand the provision of early childhood education to all children of the appropriate age;

- ▶ Develop alternative, non-formal strategies to reach disadvantaged children, youth and adults, and others such as refugees and internally displaced people who are excluded from normal educational opportunities;
- ▶ Ensure the equal participation of girls and women in all education programmes, including science and technology;
- ▶ Reduce gender, regional, rural/urban and socio-economic disparities in educational participation.

## 3.2 Improving the quality and relevance of education

Only a small proportion of children are reaching the minimum required competencies and our education systems are not performing to the standards we expect of them. To address this situation, we shall:

- ▶ Review and redesign curricula and teaching methods accordingly to make them relevant to the cultural environment and to the educational, psychological and socio-economic needs of the children;
- ▶ Pay special attention to the life skills needed for coping with such problems as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, children with special needs, people in areas of chronic conflicts and the abuse of drugs;
- ▶ Improve teacher education and training to enhance competence in participatory, inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches and the use of new technologies;
- ▶ Validate and apply home-based, traditional approaches to child care in parental guidance and teacher training, reinforcing the principle that learning starts at birth;
- ▶ Promote the use of the mother tongue in the early childhood education, early years of primary education and adult education; link personal development to the learners' cultural heritage and strengthen their self-confidence;
- ▶ Improve the development, production and distribution of learning materials that are affordable and more suitable to local conditions;
- ▶ Undertake research and develop the use of local alternatives to imported manufacturing inputs for the design and production of cost-effective textbook and learning materials;
- ▶ Define minimum and basic competencies for the different levels of education;
- ▶ Develop reliable education management/statistical information systems in order to improve analysis and decision-making;
- ▶ Develop gender- and rights-responsive educational research;
- ▶ Link formal and non-formal education for mainstreaming the marginalized groups into a lifelong learning system;

- ▶ Integrate education into the family, community and the workplace;
- ▶ Introduce democratic values and practices into the conduct of teaching and learning.

## 3.3 Institutional and professional capacity-building

Institutional and professional capacity for greater efficiency, effectiveness and gender friendliness shall be strengthened at regional, national and local levels. For this purpose, we shall:

- ▶ Give priority to the social, cultural and economic development of Africa in the design of policies, strategies and programmes;
- ▶ Assure basic rights to food, shelter, security and health to enable African children to participate fully in education;
- ▶ Create a supportive policy environment to ensure the inclusion of all in education programmes;
- ▶ Mobilize existing and new financial and human resources for ensuring the provision of basic education for all;
- ▶ Develop gender-responsive programmes and child-friendly learning environments for ensuring the full participation of the girl child in education;
- ▶ Develop institutional capacity and human resources in the areas of statistical and management information systems and research for informed policy formulation, implementation and evaluation;
- ▶ Involve teachers' unions and teachers in the development of the teaching profession;
- ▶ Develop institutional and human capacity and curriculum to prevent and manage the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its impact on education.

## 3.4 Improving partnership

We recognize that governments have the principal responsibility for ensuring adequate financing of basic education. Included in this responsibility is the leadership that government shall play in facilitating partnership at all levels with civil society, agencies, the private sector, NGOs, religious groups, communities, parents and teachers' associations, teachers' trade unions, families. We seek partnership with stakeholders, not simply in cost-sharing, but for the whole education process, including decision-making, management and teaching. Toward this new form of partnership, we shall:

- ▶ Develop a policy framework for enhancing collaboration between ministries, NGOs, civil society and others;

- ▶ Jointly plan, monitor and facilitate aid co-ordination toward country leadership, ownership and implementation;
- ▶ Share knowledge, information, technical know-how and other resources;
- ▶ Take measures to build mutual confidence, respect and accountability;
- ▶ Involve the media and other stakeholders in public discourse on education, social and development issues and in reaching out-of-school youth and adults;
- ▶ Apply aid strategies for eliminating the dependency on aid in the long term, putting more emphasis on local capacity-building and reliance on indigenous solutions;
- ▶ Create a mechanism of management and co-ordination of partnership, by legislation and consultative and awareness-raising meetings;
- ▶ Involve the stakeholders in building the minimum critical infrastructures for decentralization of implementation and management at various levels;
- ▶ For countries in conflict, channel assistance to education through operational United Nations Agencies and NGOs;
- ▶ Collaborate in developing adequate data-collection and information systems to help in assessing the status and trends within the respective education sub-sectors.

## 4. Strategy

Based on this new form of partnership, we shall forge goal-oriented alliances of stakeholders and focus on building capacity and transforming systems to meet the learning needs of the people and the developmental goals of the community, country and region.

### 4.1 Strategic objectives

Our strategic objectives are the five themes of the conference:

1. Transforming education for national and regional development goals with specific reference to social, cultural and economic and technological development.
2. Transforming curriculum content and improving relevance, quality and teaching methodologies with the needs of learners in focus.
3. Transforming the role of the state and education system structures and functions for facilitating active participation of stakeholders in the lifelong learning processes.
4. Building capacity in educational leadership, management, research and information systems.

5. Strengthening partnerships with NGOs, civil society and development partners at community, national, regional and international levels.

We shall convene stakeholders and form consultative councils to address these objectives and to develop strategies for achieving them.

### 4.2 Basic strategies

In order to achieve the goals articulated in the Johannesburg Declaration, we shall review our education systems with reference to the five strategic objectives and to the following EFA target dimensions:

- ▶ Expansion of quality early childhood education and development;
- ▶ Increasing universal access to, and completion of, primary (basic) education;
- ▶ Improvement in learning achievement;
- ▶ Promoting gender equity and enhancement of the education of girls and women;
- ▶ Reducing adult illiteracy;
- ▶ Expanding basic education and skills training for out-of-school children;
- ▶ Developing HIV/AIDS education programmes and response mechanisms;
- ▶ Improving management and governance.

In formulating country-specific strategies, we shall be guided by the following general strategies that we have adopted:

#### 4.2.1 A review and harmonization of existing policies and legislation

Special attention shall be devoted to the rights of disadvantaged groups, including girls and women, ethnic minorities, the disabled, those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and those in specially difficult circumstances in other ways.

Formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities shall be linked in order to create a 'culture of lifelong learning' that promotes social integration.

#### 4.2.2 An increase in the financing and rationalization of investment in education

The principal responsibility for financing education remains with the governments, for which we shall endeavour to devote additional funds, as well as mobilizing endogenous and private-sector resources. By improving the quality of education and the efficiency of education systems, we shall also enhance cost effectiveness.

### *4.2.3 Development of national, sub-regional and regional institutional capacities*

We shall enhance our capacity to achieve the EFA goals by effecting institutional reforms and appropriate training programmes, focusing on leadership, strategic resource planning, information management and policy research. By sharing existing regional institutions, expertise, methodologies and information, we shall ensure feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

### *4.2.4 A review of curricula and validation of African indigenous knowledge systems, values and skills*

The development of appropriate curricula shall incorporate value systems founded on indigenous languages and knowledge systems, as well as new knowledge, information and technology. New ways shall be found to link the formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities in order to create a 'culture of lifelong learning' for all, with the aim to promote social integration.

### *4.2.5 The improvement of capacities for educational change*

Effectiveness in implementing planned changes as well as responding to crisis and managing adjustment require both political consensus and professional competence. In order to enhance capacity for innovation, sensitivity to disparities and flexible responsiveness to changing needs, we shall include the intended implementers and beneficiaries in policy-review and management committees at the respective levels of implementation. To avoid entrenchment of status quo and to broaden the perspectives, the most disadvantaged groups shall be represented, if not directly, then by civil society organizations advocating their cause.

Equally, if not more, important is the capacity to implement the necessary changes. Hence, we shall develop the capacities of the implementing individuals and organizations. The urgent starting point is the level of the teaching-learning process, for example, in the school and the classroom, for this is where most of the intended changes had failed to take place. With this focus, we shall improve professional development of teaching staff, develop school management systems, create a more gender-sensitive and conducive environment for their work, etc.

### *4.2.6 Improvement of the teaching and learning environment*

Urgent attention shall be devoted to the development of materials, methodologies and social learning environments that are feasible and sustainable in the local environment and relevant

to the African learner, particularly in respect of the girl child and the disabled. We shall develop a learning environment that is safe and intellectually stimulating, and a pedagogy based on learner-centred approach and democratic values and practices in the teaching-learning interaction.

### *4.2.7 The adoption of appropriate and cost-effective technologies*

New, appropriate and cost-effective technologies shall be adopted, to complement the integration of indigenous educational methodologies. Dependence on imported materials and technology, requiring an ever-increasing supply of scarce hard currency, is not viable and shall be reduced as rapidly as possible. To start with, R&D investment shall be intensified for the development of locally available alternatives to imported paper, books, etc., while import duties on paper and other materials required for domestic book publishing are eliminated. The use of the oral tradition, more effective in appropriate contexts, shall be explored and systematized for teacher training and other education and training applications.

### *4.2.8 The promotion and support of Africa-based educational research*

Education policies must be anchored to African reality. We shall, therefore, strengthen research on the priority areas in Africa. Research shall be conducted in the language and the environment of the target groups. It shall identify, analyse and solve problems that provoke, for example, exclusion on whatever basis (gender, physical or other handicaps, language, status, race, etc.) relating to culture, educational policies and structures, curriculum and teaching practices. As lack of relevant data continues to be a major problem, those responsible for education research and statistics shall jointly elaborate strategies for research and statistics based on the recommendations of the Johannesburg Conference and submit their report to the national EFA consultative council.

### *4.2.9 The development of genuine and sustainable partnerships*

Partnerships between all stakeholders shall be built on the principles of trust, accountability and transparency. Governments, however, shall take full responsibility for providing primary education and leadership in facilitating participation of the stakeholders in education as partners. Common goals, consensus on strategies, co-ordination and working relationships shall be established through the national EFA consultative councils and the technical working groups.

## 5. Target setting

Based on this framework, each country team shall set goals, strategies and action plans in accordance with the national assessment, using the following guidelines.

### 5.1 Expansion of quality, early childhood education and development

Ensure that early childhood development (ECD) programmes are expanded two-fold by the year 2006, and that they offer safe, secure and stimulating environments. Countries should work towards providing access to ECD programmes to all children from ages 3 to 6 by the year 2015.

### 5.2 Increasing universal access and completion of primary (basic) education

Ensure that all school-age children have access to quality primary education by the year 2015. At least 80 per cent of those who enrol should complete primary education and at least 90 per cent of these should proceed to secondary level.

### 5.3 Improvement in learning achievement

Ensure that by the year 2015, all teachers have received initial training, and that in-service training programmes are operational. Training should emphasize child-centred approaches and rights and gender-based teaching. Mechanisms should be put into place for carrying out national assessments of learning achievement. All children should master the minimum competencies in language, mathematics and science.

### 5.4 Enhancement of education of girls and women

Increase the admission, completion and transition rates of girls to equal those of boys. Remove legislative hindrances to the participation of girls and women in education. Create safe

learning environments for girls and women, inside and outside school, and institutionalize affirmative action to enhance their access to education, especially in Maths and Sciences. Conduct gender awareness campaigns and training for parents, teachers and education managers.

### 5.5 Reduction of adult illiteracy

Reduce illiteracy rates by at least 50 per cent, by consolidating adult literacy and continuing education as part of lifelong learning. Develop high-quality curricula, teaching methodologies and instructional materials.

### 5.6 Expansion of basic education and skill training for out-of-school learners

Conduct studies within the next two years into the situation of out-of-school children and assess their learning needs in relation to gender, age and community context. Based on the findings of these studies, design and introduce innovative and sustainable non-formal education programmes. Ensure co-operation between education providers and ministries of education in harmonizing programmes and bridging the gap between formal and non-formal education.

### 5.7 Putting HIV/AIDS education programmes and response mechanisms into place

AIDS is no longer simply a public health problem. In many African countries, it constitutes a rapidly growing obstacle to development. Teacher training and recruitment must be accelerated to balance personnel losses. Systems must be developed for keeping the increasing number of orphans in school, and solutions found for their long-term care and development.

Life skills and HIV/AIDS education shall be strengthened or introduced in all education programmes. Working partnerships shall be forged with the media, religious organizations, civil society and communities, to build consensus on implementing HIV/AIDS curriculum and develop effective and viable strategies to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In collaboration with other ministries and stakeholders, the education sector shall take a leading role in AIDS campaigns, and urge men, including those in the teaching profession, to respect women's dignity and the right to protect themselves.

## 5.8 Improving management and governance

The development of quality education must be supported by effective management at all levels. Current practices shall be evaluated and transformed to reflect the new vision of education. Make effective use of new communication and information technologies. Decentralize education management and governance, by building the necessary capacity at the level of implementation, for facilitating the participation of other education providers, parents, communities and learners, so as to guarantee responsiveness to changing needs. Produce a strategic plan on management and governance of the new structure and functions at various levels in accordance with the new principles of partnership.

## 5.9 Increasing budgetary allocation to education

The implementation of the Framework for Action will depend on the mobilization of additional resources and the rationalization of budgetary allocations to education. Governments should ensure that at least 7 per cent of GDP is allocated to education within five years and 9 per cent within ten years. International agencies should aim to double their financial support, especially for capacity building and management development.

## 5.10 Institutionalizing the assessment and monitoring functions of the EFA team

Existing co-ordination teams and consultative structures shall be strengthened in order to monitor progress in implementing the goals of the new vision. Regional Technical Advisory Groups will be transformed into a Regional EFA Consultative Council, consisting of regional-level partners in education, which will integrate the thematic commissions and technical working groups as sub-structures. These are composed of specialists in the areas of research, statistics, administration, finance, inspection, etc. from various departments, institutions and agencies.

As a target and a benchmark, the first task is to produce, by the end of year 2000, a consensus-based work plan for regular assessment and monitoring of the implementation of the EFA Framework of Action.

## 6. Agenda of the Alliance for African Renaissance

Having adopted a common vision, we propose an Alliance for African Renaissance, for we are convinced that united we constitute a powerful force capable of achieving the paradigm shift and the investment in education that are required for the envisioned transformation. To this end, we shall jointly plan and co-ordinate our strategies, activities, sharing our competence and resources.

We are keenly aware that, for the Alliance to be effective, members must adhere to the principles of membership and assume collective responsibility. As partners in this alliance, we shall strive to meet the responsibilities in our respective domains:

### 6.1 African governments shall:

- ▶ End armed conflicts, ensure security, nurture a culture of peace and re-direct military budget, demobilized soldiers, arms, equipment and other assets to constructive use, such as occupational training, adult literacy programmes, school repair and construction, public transport, water management and irrigation, etc.;
- ▶ Promote enlightened, participatory, transparent and accountable governance, and prosecute corruption in all its forms, at every level of government and civil society;
- ▶ Concentrate resources on teaching-learning processes and delivery systems that enhance efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and resource- and cost-sharing;
- ▶ Invest more resources on basic education by an amount necessary for making a significant impact on quantity and quality;
- ▶ Ensure that savings from debt reduction are invested in education and the social sector for the betterment of heretofore marginalized and excluded children, youth and adults;
- ▶ Take the leading role in mobilizing resources, setting standards and facilitating participation of stakeholders in education, including communities, civil society, the private sector and development partners;
- ▶ Ensure that policies and the legislation are inclusive and supportive of quality education for all;



- ▶ Create an enabling environment, including affirmative action, for full participation of women in educational leadership;
- ▶ Develop institutional capacity for strategic resource planning, monitoring and implementation of the Framework for Action; and
- ▶ Remove legal, administrative and tax constraints hindering the publishing industry and promote indigenous publishers by eliminating custom duties on paper and other required materials.

## 6.2 Regional and sub-regional institutions shall:

- ▶ Establish a Regional EFA Consultative Council, supported by thematic commissions and technical working groups, assimilating the monitoring and evaluation functions of the Regional Technical Advisory Groups;
- ▶ Give education top priority for the next decade in terms of policy, programmes and activities;
- ▶ Provide effective leadership in the implementation of regional educational programmes as well as strengthening sub-regional and regional co-operation;
- ▶ Promote synergies and facilitate the emergence of sub-regional and regional learning institutions, with integrated educational programmes, information and resource sharing in such areas as development textbooks in indigenous languages, science and technology;
- ▶ Facilitate regional co-operation of institutions and networks of experts in joint programmes to build capacity in education leadership, management, strategic resource planning, policy research, and statistical information systems;
- ▶ Promote good governance and prosecute corruption within our own institutions as well as in the wider society;
- ▶ Take measures to prevent and reduce arms trade and illegal trade in strategic minerals, gold and diamonds which the warring parties are using to finance wars.

## 6.3 Civil society, including NGOs, the private sector and religious bodies, shall:

- ▶ Re-focus on community empowerment to alleviate poverty and strengthen community participation in education;
- ▶ Participate in and contribute to education in various ways, such as defining and monitoring relevance and quality, and providing volunteer services;

- ▶ Advocate the inclusion of the marginalized groups, especially those who are poor and powerless, such as orphans, the disabled and incarcerated, refugees and internally displaced people;
- ▶ Promote good governance and condemn corruption;
- ▶ Promote genuine partnerships with other stakeholders in a mutually acceptable manner for the benefit of African children and adult learners through improved management capacities to meet new challenges and responsibilities;
- ▶ Support government and community efforts in promoting sustainable development through fostering quality education for all;
- ▶ Increase involvement in campaigns for public awareness, such as HIV/AIDS, as well as for public pressure, such as the reduction of armed conflict.

## 6.4 African and international media shall:

- ▶ Popularize and publicize the new vision of African education by developing quality basic education that is holistic, humanizing and transformative, and embedded in African values and indigenous knowledge systems;
- ▶ Participate in discussions, research, monitoring and mobilization of resources for the development of quality basic education for all;
- ▶ Develop strategies to inform and educate Africans on issues affecting the development of the continent in general and education in particular, including HIV/AIDS education, girls' education, ethnic and social conflicts, and the validation of the African value system and indigenous knowledge;
- ▶ Provide a forum for public discourse and exchange of views for all stakeholders in education – students, parents, communities, civil society as well as government;
- ▶ Provide alternative delivery systems for education materials and methods.

## 6.5 International and bilateral agencies shall:

- ▶ Work in partnership with African governments and civil society to enhance the achievement of EFA, through the development of policies and strategies aimed at abolishing, rather than simply reducing, national debt;
- ▶ Ensure that savings from debt reduction are invested in education and the social sector, and that the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative is used for the betterment of African children, youth, and adult illiterates, especially targeting the hitherto marginalized or excluded;

- ▶ Work with African governments and other partners to assess the side effects of SAPs, and other development programmes, on education;
- ▶ Promote better co-ordination between agencies to improve the coherence of programmes and to avoid duplication, cross-purposes and inefficiency in resource allocation and utilization;
- ▶ Support the building of Africa's capacity to find its own solutions and political responses, by according priority to locally and regionally based experts, institutions, organizations and education-related initiatives;
- ▶ Intensify investment in R&D capacity in Africa for developing affordable alternatives to imported paper and books; the pharmaceutical industry for producing affordable medicine to treat HIV/AIDS and tropical diseases; renewable energy for providing electricity; access to Internet for communication and information; and water control, management and purification;
- ▶ Support and participate in the national and regional EFA consultative councils and support regional partnerships such as the ADEA and the education programmes of such African regional organizations as OAU, ECOWAS, SADC, etc;
- ▶ Increase financial and technical support to education in Africa so that it is at least double the current level by 2015; and
- ▶ Promote the reduction of arms trading and of the illegal trade in strategic minerals as a means of financing wars by the warring parties.

## 7. Follow-up timetable

Each country shall draw its own plan of action for achieving EFA goals. The country teams shall review the problems, priorities and mandates of partners and establish a timetable of activities. The following schedule suggests a methodology for starting the process of implementation of this Framework of Action:

- 7.1 National dissemination and review of the Johannesburg and Dakar Declarations and Frameworks of Action as a starting point of consensus building and strategic planning.
- 7.2 National government and other partners disseminate and review their National EFA 2000 Assessment Report after the Dakar meeting and in partnership set specific country goals, targets and strategies.
- 7.3 National governments and partners complete and update their plans of action to meet defined EFA goals and develop modalities of implementation and monitoring of the activities identified.
- 7.4 United Nations and other international agencies review their policies and plans of action to harmonize them with the Johannesburg and Dakar Declarations and Frameworks of Action. Make commitment to supporting country initiatives in EFA and put into place implementation programme.
- 7.5 Put country co-ordination and implementing teams into place. Refine short- and long-term implementation plans and set specific benchmarks and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Start implementation (first three months after Dakar).

## 8. Conclusion

Guided and supported by our joint commitment, courage, hope and creativity, education in the new African millennium will never be the same again. Education shall be the strategic medium for attaining African Renaissance in the globalized economy, culture and communication in the twenty-first century. ■



## Education for All in the Americas: Regional Framework of Action

Adopted by the Regional Meeting  
on Education for All in the Americas,  
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 10-12 February 2000



## Preface

Ten years after the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), the countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America assessed progress made within the region in terms of achieving the objectives and goals outlined in Jomtien. Meeting in Santo Domingo, 10–12 February 2000, the countries agreed to the present **Regional Framework of Action** in which they renewed their commitments to Education for All for the next fifteen years.

The countries of the region base their proposals and actions upon the recognition of the universal right of everyone to high-quality basic education from birth.

This **Regional Framework of Action** ratifies and lends continuity to the efforts made by countries during the past decade to achieve ever-higher levels of education for their peoples as attested in numerous international, regional and sub-regional meetings.<sup>1</sup> In these meetings as well as in the actions that countries have carried out, we see them put into practice the conviction that education is the key to sustainable human development. For education stimulates the broadening of opportunities for quality education and promotes in citizens an awareness of their rights and responsibilities.

This **Regional Framework of Action** seeks to fulfil still-pending commitments of the past decade: to eliminate the inequalities that persist in education and to see to it that everyone has access to basic education that prepares them to be active participants in development.

The diversity of situations among countries and the heterogeneity of conditions within them make it difficult to formulate homogeneous strategies aimed at reaching objectives and fulfilling commitments agreed upon by all. This means that countries must convert regional commitments into national goals, according to their own capabilities. Nevertheless, within this diversity there is a common denominator of poverty, inequality and exclusion that affects a large proportion of families in the region, who lack educational opportunities to aid their development and that of their communities. From this arises the countries' shared commitment to give priority to these individuals through differentiated strategies and focuses.

In this **Regional Framework of Action**, countries within the region commit themselves to establish national level mechanisms for public policy co-operation that express the shared

<sup>1</sup> Since the 1980s at a number of forums, the countries have agreed upon goals and guidelines for regional action: the Major Project in the Field of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Action Plan of the World Summit for Children; the World Conference on Special Needs Education (Salamanca, Spain); the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education; the Summits of the Americas; the Ibero-American Summits, and the meetings of Ministers of Education and of Ministers responsible for social areas and for early childhood.

responsibilities of government, the private sector and society in general to define and attain specific goals. They also commit themselves to periodic, open review of their actions. Increasingly, the new millennium demands that education, which is a right of all, be the object of State policies that are stable, long-range, arrived at through consensus and backed by the commitment of all members of society. For this reason, processes must be developed that are buttressed by information and by communication, establishing partnerships with all media involved in producing them.

The **Regional Framework of Action** also calls upon organizations of international co-operation to contribute to overcoming intra-regional disparities by giving priority to the efforts of countries that face the greatest challenges in reaching their goals.

## I. Achievements and pending subjects

The **Regional Framework of Action** seeks to consolidate the major achievements of Education for All attained within the region during the decade of the 1990s. On the regional level these include:

- Substantial increases in early childhood care and education, particularly for the 4–6 year old age-group.
- Significant increases in the availability of schooling and access of nearly all children to primary education.
- An increase in the number of years of compulsory education.
- A relative decrease in illiteracy, without having achieved the goal of diminishing the 1990 rate by one-half.
- Priority given to quality as an objective of education policies.
- Growing concern for the theme of equity and attention to diversity in education policies.
- A progressive inclusion of education for life themes in both formal and non-formal courses.
- Participation of diverse actors such as non-government organizations, parents and others in school life.
- Consensus regarding education as a national and regional priority.

This **Framework** recognizes that, in spite of these achievements, a number of subjects that merit the attention of countries in the region are still pending. Among these are:

- Inadequate attention to comprehensive early childhood development, especially for children under four years of age.
- High rates of repetition and drop-out in primary school, resulting in a high number of over-age children within grades and of others outside school.
- Low priority for literacy training and education of young people and of adults in national policies and strategies.
- Low levels of student learning.

- Little attention to teacher training and professional enhancement.
- Persistent inequalities in the distribution, efficiency and quality of education services.
- Inadequate interface among different actors involved in Education for All.
- Lack of efficient mechanisms for the formulation of state education policies in co-operation with those outside of government.
- Small increases in resources allocated to education and inefficient use of those that are available.
- Insufficient availability and use of information and communication technologies.

## II. Challenges recognized in the Regional Framework of Action

Subjects still pending present challenges that the countries of the region have decided to confront in the coming years. They will do so using the common denominator of the search for equity and equality of opportunity, for quality education and for the sharing of responsibilities by all of society.

The challenges are the following:

- To increase social investment in early childhood care, increasing access to early childhood development programs and improving coverage of early education programs.
- To guarantee access and retention of all boys' and girls' basic education programs, substantially reducing grade repetition, school drop-out and over-age students in grades.
- To assure access to quality education to the entire population, with special attention to vulnerable social groups.
- To give greater priority to literacy training and education of young people and of adults as part of national education systems, improving existing programs and to create alternatives for all young people and adults, especially those at risk.
- To continue to improve the quality of basic education, giving priority to the school and the classroom as learning environments, recognizing the social value of the teacher and improving assessment systems.
- To formulate inclusive education policies and to design diversified curricula and education delivery systems in order to serve the population excluded for reasons of gender, language, culture, or individual differences.
- To assure that schools encourage health, the exercise of citizenship, and basic life skills training.
- To increase and reallocate resources using criteria of equity and efficiency, as well as to mobilize other resources with alternative delivery systems.

- To offer high levels of professional enhancement to teachers and career development policies that improve the quality of their lives and the conditions of their work.
- To create necessary frameworks, so that education becomes a task for all, and that guarantee popular participation in the formulation of state policies and transparency in policy administration.
- To co-ordinate education policies that encourage multi-sector actions aimed at overcoming poverty and directed to populations at risk.
- To adopt and strengthen the use of information and communication technologies in the management of education systems and in teaching and learning processes.
- To promote school-based management, granting individual school autonomy with broad citizen participation.
- To strengthen management capacity at local, regional and national levels.

Considering past achievements, pending subjects and challenges, the countries, through this **Regional Framework of Action**, make the following commitments:

## III. Commitments of the Regional Framework of Action

### 1. Early childhood care and education

#### *Considering that:*

- A sustained increase of resources for comprehensive early childhood care and development is essential in order to guarantee the rights of citizenship from birth, to assure better learning outcomes in the future, and to reduce educational and social inequalities;
- For this period of life, it is extremely important that joint actions be undertaken by institutions that offer services in health, nutrition, education and family well-being. It is important that these services be directed toward families and the community, and that they offer literacy training and adult education as well;
- Communication strategies are key, both for education programmes directed at families and in order to establish and strengthen the links among governmental authorities, policy-makers and communities.

#### *The countries pledge to:*

- Increase investment in and access to comprehensive early childhood development programmes for children less than 4 years of age. The focus should be centred on the family and give special attention to those who are most at risk

- Maintain past achievements and increase early childhood education for children 4 years and older, particularly for less-advantaged children. Strategies should be centred on the family, the community, or specialized centres;
- Improve the quality of comprehensive early childhood development programmes by:
  - strengthening comprehensive, continuous and high quality training and support programs for families and for others who contribute to health, nutrition, and growth during early childhood;
  - strengthening monitoring and assessment of early childhood services and programs, as well as to establish national standards that are flexible, agreed upon, and sensitive to diversity;
  - establishing co-operative mechanisms between institutions that offer services and programs related to the survival and the development of children under 6 years of age;
  - better use of communication technologies and media in order to reach families who live in remote areas that are of difficult access for institutionalized programmes.

## 2. Basic education

### *Considering that:*

- By 'basic education', we refer to satisfying learning-for-life needs. These include knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that permit people to
  - develop their abilities
  - live and work with dignity
  - fully participate in the development and improvement of their quality of life
  - make decisions with access to adequate information, and
  - continue to learn throughout life.
- Basic learning occurs from birth, and is attained by children, adolescents and adults through strategies that meet the different needs of each age group.
- The empowerment of learners, the promotion of their participation and shared responsibility with families, communities and schools are basic conditions for sustaining past achievements/accomplishments and for facing new challenges.

### *The countries pledge to:*

- Maintain and increase access to basic education already achieved, assuring that it will not diminish during emergency situations caused by natural disasters or due to serious deterioration of economic and social conditions;
- Identify groups still excluded from access to basic education for reasons of gender, geographical location, culture or individual differences, and to design and implement flexible and appropriate programmes involving diverse sectors that respond to their specific conditions and needs;
- Give priority to policies and strategies aimed at decreasing repetition and drop-out, assuring permanence, progress and success of boys and girls and of adolescents in basic

education systems and programmes until they complete the basic levels required in each country.

## 3. Satisfying basic learning needs of young people and of adults

### *Considering that:*

- Over the years the region has developed its own programmes and rich experiences in the area of popular education and the education of young people and of adults;
- The demands and agreements of international conferences offer new prospects for regional action in the area of education of young people and of adults;
- Providing educational opportunities for young people and adults demands that actions be co-ordinated between social actors and those who work in the fields of health, labour and the environment.

### *The countries pledge to:*

- Incorporate the education of young people and of adults into national education systems and give priority to these age-groups in education reforms carried out as part of the key responsibility of governments in the basic education of their peoples.
- Improve and diversify education programmes by:
  - giving priority to groups that are excluded and at risk,
  - guaranteeing and consolidating literacy training,
  - giving priority to the acquisition of basic life skills and encouraging full use of the rights of citizenship,
  - linking parenting education with early childhood care and education,
  - utilizing formal and non-formal quality systems,
  - associating the education of young people and of adults with productive activities and labour, and
  - recognizing previous experience as valid learning for academic credits.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of governments and of society as a whole in this field, as well as stimulate greater participation of society in the formulation of public policies and in the definition of strategies linked to programmes and actions.

## 4. Learning achievements and quality of education

### *Considering that:*

- The quality of results is a key factor in contributing to retaining children in school and in guaranteeing the social and economic payoffs of basic education;
- Determining learning achievement requires establishing quality standards and permanent processes of monitoring and assessment;
- Systems for measuring quality should take into consideration the diversity of individual and group conditions in order to avoid the exclusion from school of children living in high-risk situations.

**The countries pledge to:**

- Continue to move forward with processes of curricular reform and to strengthen curricula by including within it life skills, values and attitudes that encourage families to keep their children in school and that provide people with the necessary instruments to overcome poverty and to improve the quality of life of families and communities;
- Reserve a special place within quality improvement strategies for the school and for the classroom as learning environments characterized by:
  - the recognition of diversity and heterogeneity of students and of flexibility that responds adequately to their special learning needs,
  - the encouragement of teamwork on the part of school directors and teachers,
  - normative frameworks that put into practice the rights of children and adolescents to participate, together with their teachers, parents and the community, and
  - skill development for autonomous school management and responsibility for processes and results;
- Recognize the social and professional value of teachers as essential actors within quality education by establishing agreed-upon policies for certification, improvement of working conditions, remuneration and incentives for continuing improvement of professional skills;
- Provide books and other didactic and technological resources in order to improve student learning;
- Organize appropriate systems of monitoring and assessment that take into consideration individual and cultural differences, that are based on agreed-upon national and regional standards and that make possible participation in international studies;
- Stimulate on-going action of the media in order to support student learning.

**5. Inclusive education****Considering that:**

- Basic education for all requires assuring access, permanence, quality learning, and full participation and integration of all children and adolescents, particularly for members of indigenous groups, those with disabilities, those who are homeless, those who are workers, those living with HIV/AIDS and others;
- Protection against discrimination based on culture, language, social group, gender or individual differences is an inalienable human right that must be respected and fostered by education systems.

**The countries pledge to:**

- Formulate inclusive education policies that define goals and priorities in accordance with different categories of excluded populations in each country, including establishing legal and institutional frameworks that will effectively make inclusion the responsibility of the entire society;

- Design diversified education delivery systems, flexible school curricula and new education environments within the community. These should value diversity, viewing it as a force for social development. They should preserve innovative experiences in formal and non-formal education in order to meet the needs of all boys and girls, adolescents, young people and adults;
- Promote and strengthen intercultural and bilingual education in multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural societies;
- Implement a sustained process of communication, information and education within families that emphasizes the importance and the benefits for countries of educating those who are currently excluded.

**6. Education for life****Considering that:**

- Education should provide skills for living and for developing
  - a culture of the respect for law,
  - the exercise of citizenship and democratic life,
  - peace and non-discrimination,
  - the development of civic and ethical values,
  - sexuality,
  - the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, and
  - the preservation and care of the environment;
- The inclusion of this learning into either multidisciplinary or subject curricula presents a challenge to new curricula construction, for joint work with communities and for the role of the teacher as a life skills model.

**The countries pledge to:**

- Guarantee that the school be a learner-friendly environment, both physically and socially, one that favours healthy lifestyles, the practice of life skills, and early exercise of citizenship and of democratic values, and that it provides opportunities for participation in decisions regarding school life and learning;
- Establish flexible curricular norms that allow schools to integrate contents and meaningful experiences into the curriculum that are relevant to the community and that permit the school to interact with the community;
- Train teachers, parents, young people and adults so that they may promote and support this kind of learning in everyday life;
- Include specific indicators on this kind of learning in order to monitor and assess it within the school and to measure its impact on the lives of students;
- Stimulate and carry out activities in education for life developed by the media, by social organizations, NGOs, the private sector, political parties and others.

## 7. Increase of national investment in education and effective mobilization of resources on all levels

### Considering that:

- The priority of education as a key instrument for development should be expressed by the commitment to gradually increase investment in the sector to at least 6 per cent of GDP in order to achieve universal coverage of basic education and to overcome current deficits;
- Systems of information and of assessment are key components in decision-making in education. Data must therefore be sought both on the education system and on its social, economic and cultural contexts. These guide the allocation of resources for the education of children, adolescents, young people and adults.

### The countries pledge to:

- Develop focus strategies for the allocation of educational expenditures in order to diminish inequalities and to assist at-risk populations;
- Increase the allocation of resources for education based on the efficiency and efficacy of their use, and based upon criteria of equity and affirmative action;
- Establish mechanisms for establishing budgets and allocating resources that include broad social participation, that lend transparency and credibility to the management of resources and that guarantee accountability, for all of which adequate and timely information is of key importance;
- Use decentralization as an opportunity to optimize the use of existing resources and to promote the mobilization of new resources, particularly those coming from the private sector;
- Actively seek alternative mechanisms for financing education, such as public/private sharing and foreign debt/education swaps.

## 8. Professional enhancement for teachers

### Considering that:

- Teachers occupy an irreplaceable position in transforming education, in changing teaching practices within the classroom, in the use of teaching and technological resources, in facilitating relevant and quality learning, and in the development of student values;
- The value that society attributes to teachers is associated with the improvement of their performance and their working and living conditions;
- The progressive incorporation of information and communication technologies into society requires that these subjects be included in initial and in-service teacher training;
- Rural schools and those serving at-risk populations require teachers with higher quality academic training and human relations skills.

### The countries pledge to:

- Offer teachers high quality academic training that is linked to research and the ability to produce innovations, and that prepares them for carrying out their duties in diverse social, economic, cultural, and technological contexts;
- Establish teacher career policies that
  - permit them to improve their living and working conditions,
  - stimulate the profession and provide incentives for talented young people to enter it,
  - create incentives for teachers to pursue high levels of pedagogical and academic training,
  - develop skills to accompany and facilitate lifelong learning,
  - increase commitments with the community;
- Implement systems for assessing teacher performance and for measuring the quality and levels of achievement in the profession, following basic standards agreed upon by teachers' unions and other organizations;
- Establish normative frameworks and education policy in order to incorporate teachers into the management of changes in the education system and to encourage teamwork within the school.

## 9. New opportunities for participation of the community and the society

### Considering that:

- There is a growing need on the part of many in society to exercise the right to participate in education decisions that affect them, as well as to assume the responsibilities that accompany such decisions;
- Public policies that require long-term stability and continuity are made through processes in which the state and society jointly participate;
- The great potential represented by various social sectors such as workers associations, unions, business groups, political parties, indigenous peoples, young people, women, NGOs, community organizations, artistic and cultural groups, etc., is not sufficiently utilized.

### The countries pledge to:

- Create normative, institutional and financial frameworks that:
  - create new opportunities for participation,
  - legitimize existing forums and
  - guarantee the participation of society in the elaboration, monitoring and assessment of education policies, and in the development of national plans and programmes in these areas;
- Create and strengthen channels for communication and consultation, facilitating the interface among different actors in education, whether governmental, private, or non-governmental.



## 10. Linking of basic education to strategies for overcoming poverty and inequality

### Considering that:

- During the decade of the 1990s, countries within the region developed policies and programmes to promote basic education, seeking to make an impact on overcoming poverty and inequality through various measures;
- One must keep in mind past attempts to increase education opportunities that were linked to providing food, clothing, basic health services; to budgetary strategies of redistribution and targeting; to support measures for families through study grants and education activity carried out by leaders, institutions and/or community groups;
- Education, in order to have a more effective impact on overcoming poverty and inequality, must be part of more broad-based social policies and developed within a multi-sector strategic framework.

### The countries pledge to:

- Bring together various activities designed to:
  - strengthen education within the ambit of social policies;
  - convert assistance policies into policies to promote the skills of people;
  - combine, at all levels, education policies and programmes with policies and programmes for generating employment, improving health and developing communities;
  - include contents and values within education that promote solidarity and improvement of the quality of life.
- Guarantee equity in the distribution of both public and private resources for education and for social development, and assure greater efficiency in their utilization to benefit at-risk populations;
- Promote programmes for the support and accompaniment of children, adolescents, young people, and adults of poor families and those affected by social and economic inequalities in order to guarantee their basic education and full participation in the design, management, follow-up and assessment of such training;
- Improve living conditions for teachers themselves as a necessary condition for their professional growth.

## 11. Utilization of technologies in education

### Considering that:

- The current technological revolution in information and communication has produced new ways for people and organizations to relate to one another. Education cannot remain outside of these changes. Increasingly, teachers assume the role of facilitator and mediator so that students may critically utilize these new technologies;
- These technologies should be included as a key factor in the improvement of processes and opportunities of teaching and learning;

- Information and communication technologies fulfil a crucial role in the administration, planning, management and follow-up of education policies and processes;
- These technologies, which are tools, should not be merely one more factor for exclusion and discrimination; on the contrary, they should be accessible to all students and teachers.

### The countries pledge to:

- Support use in the classroom of information and communication technologies;
- Promote permanent and equitable access to communication and information technologies to teachers and to communities as well as provide ongoing opportunities for training through information centres, better practices networks and other mechanisms for the dissemination and interchange of experiences;
- Adopt, and strengthen where currently in use, information and communication technologies in order to improve policy decision-making and planning of education systems and school administration. This will facilitate the processes of decentralization and autonomy of school management, and the training of administrators and teachers in the introduction and use of information and communication technologies;
- At the same time, re-emphasize the importance of books as key instruments for access to culture and as a fundamental means of using the new technologies.

## 12. Management of education

### Considering that:

- The improvement of quality and equity of education is closely related to improvement in management at all levels of the education system;
- With increasing decentralization and greater participation of the school community, the role of school principals acquires broader and more complex dimensions;
- Information and assessment systems are vital for education policy decision-making.

### The countries pledge to:

- Define administrative structures that consider the individual school as the basic unit, with managerial autonomy, progressively generating mechanisms for citizen participation and establishing levels of responsibility for each actor in the management process, in the control of results and in accountability;
- Promote national and regional mechanisms that offer school principals and teachers professional training in school and curricular management, in the use of technology, and in values, attitudes and practices that foster transparency in education management;
- Develop systems for the collection of information, data analysis, research and innovations as tools to improve policy decision-making;

- Establish parameters that identify the responsibilities of personnel that work in the education system, as well as support mechanisms and policies for personnel administration;
- Improve systems for measuring results, assessment and accountability, adjusted to comparable indicators and standards, supported by assessment mechanisms that are outside the education system itself.

## IV. A call for international co-operation

The countries of the region, upon assuming the above commitments:

- Call upon the international community and co-operation agencies to increase and perfect support mechanisms to countries in order to contribute to the fulfilment of goals established in this Framework of Action and to assume a shared responsibility for their fulfilment, particularly in the support of countries facing the most critical problems;
- Agree to foster country-to-country co-operation for the exchange of lessons learned and of useful experiences for improving education;
- Appeal to international financing agencies to align their funding policies with the directions of national education policies and to increase the amount of resources dedicated to education, especially in less-favoured countries;
- Call upon governments and societies to make every effort to co-operate in the development of policies, strategies and action plans that will give a new thrust to policies that guarantee to all people the right of access to basic, quality education and to reap its benefits. ■



## Education for All in the Arab States: Renewing the Commitment

The Arab Framework for Action  
to Ensure Basic Learning Needs in the Arab  
States in the Years 2000-2010

Adopted by the Regional Conference on Education for All  
for the Arab States  
Cairo, Egypt, 24-27 January 2000



## Preamble

**Based on** the assessment of the efforts and achievements made in the Arab States as regards basic education, Education for All, since the Jomtien Conference (1990) until the end of the decade (the year 2000), in preparation for the International Forum on EFA (Dakar, April 2000);

**According to:**

- the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Declaration on Education for All, the Arab Document on Children, the Arab Plan for Childhood Care, Protection and Development, and other Arab and international documents on education, and
- the strategies adopted by the Arab Ministers of Education during their meetings;

**Aware of** world challenges and changes and their consequences on the development of the Arab Region, and in order to benefit from their positive achievements while avoiding their negative consequences;

**Conscious of** the importance of education as a key for human development which constitutes a generator of global sustainable development;

**In order to** achieve education for all, both quantitatively and qualitatively, an education of high quality that is aimed at enabling all to achieve excellence and to develop, strengthen and promote their capacities to the fullest extent;

**Reaffirming** the role of education in providing equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, both urban and rural, and in keeping with the spirit of the century represented by the scientific, computer and technological revolutions that reaffirm the concept of self-learning which constitutes the basis for lifelong learning, in order to allow individuals to have access to data and to criticize, select, classify, treat and use this data in the different areas of social, economic and cultural life;

**Considering** the fact that education is a social issue, and that all Arab and international forces, institutions and organizations as well as government and non-governmental associations, unions and organizations, should join efforts to meet the Education for All needs and goals;

**Inspired by** the cultural and spiritual values of the Arab nation which reaffirm that education is an essential dimension of our cultural identity today and in the future;

We, the participants in the Arab Regional Conference on Education for All – EFA 2000 Assessment, held in Cairo from 24 to 27 January 2000, recommend that Arab States adopt the document

entitled *Education for All in the Arab States: Renewing the Commitment* as the Arab Framework for Action to Ensure Basic Learning Needs in the Arab States in the Years 2000–2010.

## Introduction

**1.** The Arab Framework for Action to Ensure Basic Learning Needs in the Arab States in the Years 2000–2010 is based upon the following:

- (1) The World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, respectively adopted and agreed on by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990);
- (2) The Mid-decade Review of the International Consultative Forum on EFA (Amman, 1996) and the various international and Arab activities related to the Declaration and Framework for Action undertaken in the 1990s as regards the substance of the two aforementioned documents;
- (3) The documents about childhood and Education for All adopted by the Ministers of Education in the Arab States;
- (4) EFA 2000 Assessment made by the Arab States in preparation for The Arab Regional Conference on Education for All (Cairo, 24–27 January 2000);
- (5) The Preliminary Draft Framework for Action elaborated by the International Consultative Forum on EFA and proposed to discussion in preparation of the World Education Forum (Dakar, April 2000); and
- (6) The discussions of the Arab Regional Conference on Education for All – EFA Year 2000 Assessment held in Cairo (24–27 January 2000).

**2.** The objectives of this Framework are twofold:

- (1) To form a reference and guide for all stakeholders concerned with education in the Arab Region and committed to achieving the goals of Education for All, in their strategies, plans and programmes;
- (2) To convey the concerns of the Arab States while discussing the EFA issues at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000).

## I. Background

**Learning is the key to human sustainable development and is the foundation for enlightened existence and the sustenance of all livelihoods**

**3.** Learning, this treasure within, is the product of open and diversified access to knowledge and experience. Thus, the concept of learning throughout life emerges as one of the keys to life in the

twenty-first century. It goes beyond the traditional distinction between school and lifelong education. It is designed to meet the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world.

4. Four pillars were proposed as the foundation of education by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, i.e.: *learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together, learning to live with others*. The capacity to learn is at the heart of human development. It is the foundation for enlightened existence and the sustenance of all livelihoods.
5. Education aims not only at providing equal opportunities for individuals to learn, but also at achieving a *learning society* based on the acquisition, renewal and use of knowledge. This involves increasing the scope and opportunities for access to knowledge for all individuals. Education should enable everyone to gather information and to select, arrange, manage and use it. Learning is the key to sustainable human development.

#### Enhancing learning is improving the quality of life

6. The provision of equal opportunities for learning is a mandatory social service that must be provided to all individuals, as one of their basic rights and a condition for improving the quality of life. Health care is another important social service. It encompasses fighting diseases, providing nutrition and pure water, and ensuring an unpolluted environment.
7. Among these mandatory social services other than education is health care, which encompasses the eradication of diseases, the provision of nutrition, safe water and a non-polluted environment. The expansion of education has led to greater health awareness. Education for women leads not only to enhanced child health care but also to the enhancement of the general care of children, including their education. Enhancement of the educational level of the mother is no doubt the most crucial factor underlying participation in education and improving the quality of life.
8. Moreover, the expansion of education leads to a more enhanced environmental awareness, a greater knowledge of basic rights and duties, and a generally increased sense of citizenship and enlightened involvement in civic life. It is generally believed today all over the world that education is the most important means to fight poverty.

#### Meeting basic learning needs is an international priority

9. The World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) affirmed the necessity to provide basic learning needs by stating that: **'Every person – child, youth and adult –**

**shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.'**

10. Furthermore, the Jomtien Conference agreed on a framework, derived from the World Declaration on Education for All, to be taken as a guide for action at the national, regional and international levels.

#### Re-affirmation of the Jomtien message at the international level

11. During the ten years after the Jomtien Conference, the international community, with the participation of the Arab States, has witnessed a series of conferences, all of which re-affirmed the message of the Jomtien Declaration and linked education to development, quality of life, human rights, democracy, social integration and justice. These conferences called for a special emphasis on the education of girls and women, and the struggle against poverty, unemployment and social exclusion (the World Summit for Children, 1990; the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992; the World Conference on Human Rights, 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994; the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, 1995; the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995; the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, 1997; etc).
12. The Mid-Decade Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (Amman, 1996) was held to assess what has been achieved in the five years that followed the Jomtien Conference. The meeting discussed various new challenges and the continuing challenges that still have to be addressed. The Amman Affirmation recommended 'stressing the forms of learning and critical thinking that enable individuals to understand changing environments, create new knowledge and shape their own destinies'. It further noted that the continuing challenges to the goals of EFA include mainly the education of women and girls, the training, status and motivation of teachers, the role of the family and the local community in education, and the broad partnership to achieve EFA goals.

#### Re-affirmation of the Jomtien message at the Arab level

13. At the Arab level, the Cairo Declaration (1994) emphasized the role of education in achieving sustainable development. The Conference expressed its determination 'to frame educational programmes that would bring the region into a position of world prominence in the next century'. The Conference concluded that two major areas stand out as pressing priorities requiring concerted action: the problem of illiteracy and the quality of education.

14. Furthermore, the Arab Declaration on Adult Education (Cairo, 1997) re-affirmed the contents of Jomtien Declaration (1990) and Amman Affirmation (1996), and renewed its commitment towards The Arab Strategy for Education, the Strategy to Eradicate Illiteracy in the Arab States and the recommendations of the Arab conferences on education, particularly the Fifth Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in the Arab States (MINEDARAB V) held in Cairo, 1994. The Arab Declaration on Adult Education called for the necessity to consider illiteracy eradication as a top priority for the development of the Arab States. It also confirmed its endeavour to ensure new opportunities and educational programmes for the continuous education of adults.

## II. Achievements and problems

15. The efforts exerted at the international, regional and Arab levels have culminated in various policies, laws, measures, programmes and activities at the level of each Arab State. This in turn has led to an improvement in the quality of life and to providing learning opportunities and improving education quality.

16. Yet, all that has been achieved by the end of the twentieth century remains below the expectations. Poverty is still widespread and, where it exists, educational opportunities decrease and so does the quality of health care. In addition, there is a spread of other problems, like unemployment, violence, conflicts and the continuous threat to family ties and social integration. Poverty generates poverty, as illiteracy generates illiteracy conducive to social decline. In some countries, the suffering is greater than in others; in rural areas more than in urban ones; in geographically remote areas, and among marginalized minorities and nomads more than among others.

17. Although various studies have highlighted the importance of educating females as a positive investment factor, girls and women have not sufficiently benefited from the allocated resources. Where girls do complete a primary education, there is often a large gender gap in the transition rate to secondary school. The gap between males and females becomes wider when literacy is considered. When combined with other factors related to the quality of life (especially in rural areas and shanty towns) such as poverty, disability, violence against females, malnutrition, rapid social changes, unemployment and risks of acquiring diseases such as AIDS, it appears that the females are more systematically disadvantaged than their male counterparts, on the basis of discrimination by gender.

### Early childhood education still does not receive the required attention

18. Most of the Arab States have a pre-primary system of education for children aged 3–5 years. In some States, this takes on a traditional form, such as the *Kuttabs*, supported by government as in Morocco and Mauritania. The gross enrolment ratio (GER), however, varies between 0.7 per cent and 99 per cent – the educational indicator showing the widest discrepancy between Arab States. But all states reported improvement between 1990 and 1999. In the latter, the ratio is less than 13 per cent in ten states, between 13 and 50 per cent in six states, and more than 70 per cent in only two states (Lebanon 71 per cent and Kuwait 99 per cent). This shows that Arab States, rich and poor countries alike, do not devote the required attention to ECCD. It seems that, for the Arab States, education at this stage is primarily a family matter.

19. On the other hand, the percentage of children who attend the first grade of primary education after pursuing certain pre-primary schooling (for one year or more) is higher than GER in pre-primary. This indicates, first, that pre-primary schooling is short term in most states, and second, that the tendency towards schooling at the pre-primary level is increasing. In most Arab States, ECCD still generally constitutes an important challenge, since it affects school life at the primary level.

### Increase in primary education enrolment

20. The most important achievements in the Arab States in the previous decade relate to enrolment in primary education. Most of the Arab States either maintained or improved their enrolment ratio in the first grade (6–7 years old). The countries which still show low GER at this level (82 per cent and below in late 1990s) are Djibouti, the Sudan, Mauritania and Yemen. Where enrolment ratios are high, the gender gap is smaller (1 to 4 percentage points), and where they are low it increases (10 percentage points). Yet, when looking at the net enrolment ratio (NER) at the first grade the picture is different: nine countries show a NER of 82 per cent and below.

21. In terms of GER in primary education, the Arab States have demonstrated significant progress. Only in three countries is GER equal to 68 per cent and below, versus thirteen countries where it is 90 per cent and above (and where gender parity index is 0.9 and above). Two countries have shown a very high rate of progress between the early and late 1990s: the Sudan and Mauritania.

22. Besides this progress, the discrepancies between rural and urban areas are still high, and female participation in primary education is always less than that of males (the parity index is equal to 1.0 and above in one country). In addition, the problem of enrolment appears more striking when looking at the NER.

In spite of a real improvement in the 1990s, there are still six countries which have a NER of less than 80 per cent, and where the gap between boys and girls widens in this regard: the parity index is equal to or less than 0.9 in six countries.

### Illiteracy yet prevails

- 23.** The number of illiterates in the Arab States is estimated today at 68 million (of which 63 per cent are women). Despite the expanded efforts, one fourth of these is found in one country: Egypt (17 million), and 70 per cent in five countries: Egypt, the Sudan, Algeria, Morocco and Yemen. In most of these countries illiteracy is accompanied by population size, high population growth rates, poverty and concentration of population in rural areas.
- 24.** It is clear that the feature of illiteracy in the Arab States is different from that of the expansion of primary education, for illiteracy is the negative product of education that had not been completely expanded in the past. The strongest element in the spread of illiteracy in the Arab States and its strongest explanatory factor is the gender gap. The Gender Parity Index in these countries is 0.69. This indicates that illiteracy in the Arab Region is caused not only by poverty, but also by attitudes against education of girls and by the absence of effective policies to change these attitudes.
- 25.** The presence of 68 million illiterates in the Arab Region and the existence of illiteracy in all Arab States, though in widely varying rates, not only represent a great challenge to these states in terms of development, social justice and the quality of life, but also serves as a serious indictment to the education systems themselves. These marks are reflected in the failure of schools to draw children and to retain them enough to prevent them from returning to illiteracy as well as in the low level of learning achievement.

### Quality education is still a privilege for a few

- 26.** After Jomtien, learning achievement was adopted as a key indicator of the quality of education. Nine Arab States participated (between 1993 and 1999) in the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) project conducted by UNESCO and UNICEF. The results show that competencies acquired by pupils in primary education (4th grade) are far below the standard proposed in Jomtien: only 12 per cent, 10 per cent and 25 per cent showed high skills (80 per cent of the competencies or more) in Arabic, mathematics and life skills, respectively. In Arabic language, only Tunisia and Morocco achieved the benchmark rate suggested at Jomtien (80 per cent of pupils). None of the participating states achieved the suggested level in mastering mathematics competencies. Only Tunisia and Jordan reached the suggested level of achievement in life-skills tests. In average, the

achievement of girls was better than that of boys. Achievement among pupils in urban schools was higher than in rural schools.

- 27.** According to the results of the Monitoring Learning Achievement project, primary education in the Arab States appears to be of poor quality and not providing for the basic learning needs to the pupils. This means that, in the past, these states focused more on providing school places than on enhancing the quality of education. Therefore, improving the quality of education constitutes a main challenge to the Arab States.
- 28.** Among the components of learning acquisition, basic skills for a better life are to be taken into consideration. Many Arab States include, in their educational goals and objectives, elements related to these skills, such as vocational training, health, environment and citizenship education. Mass media are also mentioned as a means for the transmission of values and knowledge in relation to these skills. However, in general, these essential aspects of learning have not received sufficient attention and the information about the acquisition of basic skills related to the quality of life is still very scarce.

### Teachers' qualifications need improvement

- 29.** Data from Arab States show that the teachers fulfilling the minimum required national qualifications vary widely between 21 per cent and 100 per cent (late 1990s). In addition, the required entry qualifications vary from completing secondary school to completing four or five years at a higher education institution. They also differ in terms of pedagogical requirements from nil to a full programme approaching international standards. This is a large discrepancy. The concept of teaching licence is still not common in educational circles and professionalization of teaching remains a rhetorical discourse. However, the pupil/teacher ratio is low in general. It ranges between 11 and 25 in fourteen states, as opposed to 26 and 30 in three states and 31 and above in two. Furthermore, more efforts should be exerted in order to resolve many problems facing the status of teachers, mainly concerning their work conditions and their social position, in order to attract young and qualified people.

### Improvements in internal efficiency

- 30.** Available data on internal efficiency show slight decline in repetition rates, improvement in the number of pupils staying at school until the 5th grade and better performance of girls as compared to boys. However, the primary level of the education systems in the Arab States still shows weaknesses in internal efficiency: persistence of drop-out and repetition (which increase the higher one goes up the educational ladder), and the long time needed to complete primary education.

### Expenditure on education

**31.** Achievements and problems of education in the Arab States depend largely, among other factors, on expenditure. Arab States exerted a substantial effort that led to a greater expenditure on education in the last decade. But, in view of what has been mentioned about enrolment ratios and quality of education, the expenditure on primary education seems to be suffering from different problems: inadequacy, in some countries, between financial resources and educational requirements; wastage or lack of rationalization of spending; weakness in capital expenditure (investment); high cost of educating remote and widespread population; and weakness in budgeting techniques. Such problems raise questions about the potential role of non-governmental organizations, diversification of financial sources, mobilization of resources, accountability, and the means to build the national capacity for planning, budgeting and assessment.

### Poor management of education systems

**32.** If the increase of financial resources may be a pressing need for poor countries, the major problem in most of Arab States is how to make a good use of available resources, human as well as financial. Surveys on learning achievement showed the absence of developed systems of monitoring. Reports on expenditure show problems in terms of planning and budgeting. Education management information systems (EMIS) are lacking in general. Problems of centralization versus decentralization are still debated. Thus, the issue of efficient educational management constitutes a serious challenge in the Arab States in order to meet the goals of EFA.

## III. Challenges and opportunities

**33.** Time is passing and, in the Arab Region, millions of individuals remain deprived of education and millions are getting education of poor quality, while most of the rest are not appropriately prepared for the technological era and the international competition in the new millenium. We are faced with the challenge of achieving what has not been achieved since Jomtien and with the new challenges after 2000.

**34.** There is a general consensus on EFA goals, and that education for all is pivotal in addressing increasing poverty, sustaining socio-economic progress, and honouring the human rights of every individual. Lacking are the necessary resources. And despite the political will, and although education stands high on rhetorical agendas of governments, commitments made at Jomtien by Arab States remain highly visible but significantly unmet.

**35.** It is more starkly evident that failure to quicken the pace of progress towards Jomtien goals will have grave consequences for peace, stability and prosperity. The stage is now set for a stronger, more action-oriented approach of country initiatives for basic education, with important international commitment and support, reset within the circumstances and imperatives of the new millenium.

### The challenges of the twenty-first century – outlook for 2010

**36.** Globalization imposes a labour market that surpasses the boundaries of countries and a tough competition according to the acquired qualifications. These qualifications are primarily the product of learning.

**37.** Globalization furthermore dictates the increasing use of technology, which is the most efficient means for production and communication. But the ability to make use of technology and what that entails in terms of skills and knowledge is also a product of learning. So what can the Arab educational authorities and organizations do to prevent marginalization and to positively participate in the globalization process?

**38.** Technology also induces in people a deep transformation in how to learn, how to use what they have learned, and how to evaluate the importance and relevance of what they have learned. We live in a period where economical progress is essentially based on knowledge. Thus, learning becomes more than ever a decisive factor in prosperity.

**39.** This also means that the cost of learning will increase. This is as true for households as it is for countries. Poor countries, unable to enter more technology-intensive-based markets, run the risk of excessive marginalization in trade and investment. In developed and developing countries alike, poverty and inequality at the household levels are increasingly associated with educational attainment. And the gap is widening between those who have access to information and the capacity to use technology of communication (e-mail, e-commerce and e-learning) and those who don't or can't.

**40.** The Arab States furthermore face the problem of the usage of foreign language as the technological medium. Mastering a foreign language is not generalized, nor is the Arabization of technology.

**41.** The unpredictable changes surrounding our lives give daily new meaning to the imperatives of the Jomtien commitments. That is because, as skills requirements for adequate, livelihood sustaining employment rise, basic education becomes ever more essential for work, or for school success and transition to secondary and higher levels of education.



**42.** Demographic growth poses another challenge to the education systems. While the annual average growth rate is estimated for the years 2000–2010 at 1.2 per cent for the world and 1.5 per cent for the developing countries, it is 2.5 per cent for the Arab States. In 2010, the estimated population of the age group 5–18 years old is 110 million. If the enrolment ratio in general education will be around 80 per cent for this age group, Arab States have to ensure educational opportunities to 88 million students, i.e. to provide resources for an additional 29 million students (present figure: 59 million students). This demographic increase places severe pressures on the education systems in terms of expenditure, management, qualified human resources, etc. At the same time, the population growth entails competing demands for resources to ensure other basic needs such as nutrition, housing, health services, etc. Some education systems in the Arab States have suffered from high indebtedness and the consequences of applying structural adjustment and economic reform policies.

**43.** Furthermore, in the past decade a number of Arab States suffered from persistent troubles and conflicts (Algeria and the Sudan), embargoes (Iraq, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Sudan), occupation and wars (Lebanon, Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic and the Sudan). The education systems in these countries suffered deeply from these troubles which hindered their capacities and delayed the achievement of their objectives according to the Jomtien Declaration. The return to peace and normal life through the elimination of all forms of occupation, embargoes, conflicts and tensions appears to be a *sine qua non* precondition to ensure education for all in troubled areas. In parallel, education has a role to play in contributing to create a peaceful environment in the region.

#### Building on available opportunities and progress made

**44.** Facing these challenges does not initiate from a void. It has to be recognized that there are opportunities available that were not there a decade ago. An unequivocal global consensus has been forged around the critical role of education for sustainable human development. There is an even stronger reaffirmation of the importance of human rights. Since the Copenhagen Summit (1995), there is renewed concern for the rights of the socially excluded, marginalized, and impoverished, and mounting recognition of the benefits for societies of educating females.

**45.** Donors are answering the calls from countries to strengthen ownership of competencies and the development of national capacities. The educational deterioration that many developing countries experienced in the 1990s has been stemmed. And it is noticeable that civil society has become more likely to assume its responsibilities.

**46.** New and creative ways are now available also for reaching out to learners with disabilities or learning difficulties, as a means of ensuring that their capacities for learning are given the utmost chance to flourish.

**47.** Modern information and communication technologies offer in general enormous potential for educational outreach, enhancing access, self-paced learning and meticulous assessment of learning outcomes.

**48.** At the national level, new synergies are beginning to develop around more comprehensive governance systems and the participation of a wider set of actors, such as NGOs representing civil society in educational planning and implementation.

**49.** At the global level, original core sponsorship of education for all (by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and UNDP) has extended through the International Consultative Forum to engage another United Nations agency (UNFPA) and representation from a wide set of public, private and non-governmental constituencies.

#### The year 2000: renewing the commitment to the Jomtien Declaration

**50.** Ten years after the Jomtien Declaration, the definition of basic education and the commitments surrounding it still stand as a persistent challenge to the Arab States. This Declaration focused, for the first time, on the basic learning needs of neglected minorities and on learning achievement rather than on mere school enrolment.

**51.** The ten articles of the Jomtien Declaration shed light, illuminating the road ahead: (1) meeting basic learning needs; (2) shaping the vision; (3) universalizing access and promoting equity; (4) focusing on learning acquisition; (5) broadening the means and scope of basic education; (6) enhancing the environment for learning; (7) strengthening partnerships; (8) developing a supporting policy context; (9) mobilizing resources; and (10) strengthening international solidarity.

**52.** The Jomtien Declaration remains even more vibrant and relevant today. The commitment should be renewed. And the follow-up efforts already exerted by the states must be continued and enriched by the experiences and the information gained during the past decade. We have a shared responsibility to ensure that failure is prevented.

#### The Arab Framework for Action: a guide for all the partners to achieve EFA

**53.** Taking into account the above-mentioned background, the achievements and the problems in the Arab States and the

challenges – those imposed by what was unmet in the 1990s and those imposed by the developments of the twenty-first century – the Arab States are called upon to adopt this Framework for Action and to act in conformity with it.

**54.** The purpose of the Arab Framework for Action is to act as a reference and a guide for all stakeholders concerned with education in the Arab States and committed to achieving education for all, in their plans and programmes, each within its adopted goals, missions, and target groups, with the view of strengthening partnerships at the global, regional and local levels, in the single aim of meeting basic learning needs of all by 2010.

**55.** The main **stakeholders** to this Framework are:

- (1) The governments of the Arab States which hold responsibility for immediate action towards achieving the goals of education for all, and for leading and co-ordinating actions aimed at achieving these goals;
- (2) All stakeholders from civil society at the national level, i.e. universities and other educational institutions, NGOs, the private sector, etc., which should take a proactive role in contributing significantly to the achievement of the goals of education for all;
- (3) Arab and other regional organizations in the Arab States Region responsible for providing support and for promoting bilateral and multilateral co-operation at the Arab regional level; and
- (4) International agencies and organizations responsible for providing support and promoting bilateral and multilateral co-operation at the international level.

## IV. Principles for action

**56.** The following five principles are proposed as guidelines for all actions aiming at ensuring the provision of basic learning needs in the Arab States.

**57.** The principle of **comprehensiveness**, which includes the following:

- Viewing education for all through the expanded vision confirmed in Jomtien;
- Considering learning as one of the key components of the quality of life, and an essential factor in improving this quality;
- The acknowledgment at all levels and sectors of society that learning is the cornerstone to sustainable human development;
- Dealing with learners in a holistic manner, in order to understand their surrounding environment and to meet their needs and develop their personalities in an integrated and harmonious manner.

**58.** The principle of **equity**, which consists of the following:

- Considering access to educational opportunities as an absolute right to be provided by society to all citizens of all ages without discrimination;
- Considering social and geographical inequality of educational opportunities as a factor leading to the creation of a gap in society that is hard to close;
- Integrating in the educational plans and processes the various excluded groups, such as the impoverished, rural populations, the marginalized, the displaced, refugees, nomads, immigrants, street and working children, and others in difficult circumstances;
- Addressing the needs of special groups and racial, religious, and cultural minorities when generalizing programmes and curricula;
- Considering gender discrimination in basic education as incompatible with social equity and with development needs, and as a breach in human rights;
- Considering the inclusion of learners with special needs, especially those with disabilities and learning difficulties, in educational programmes, as a right and an essential means for their self-actualization and social integration;
- Providing the gifted and talented with special care and an appropriate teaching/learning environment so as to develop their talents and capacities in order to contribute in the development process and to meet the challenges of the future.

**59.** The principle of a **learner-friendly environment**, which includes the following:

- Providing a healthy and secure environment to learners;
- Providing quality education relevant to learners' needs and to the requirements of the changing society;
- Providing an educational environment based on mutual rights and responsibilities, and non-discrimination between genders;
- Fostering the attitudes that enhance the values of respect, tolerance, and understanding of others;
- Promoting independent thinking and expression among learners;
- Providing committed teachers keen to discover the learners' potentials and to work for their development;
- Making this environment available and affordable to all.

**60.** The principle of **commitment**, which includes the following:

- High-level re-commitment at all levels of government and leadership in civil society, regional and international organizations and other partners, to renewed efforts towards meeting the basic learning needs of all, children, youth, and adults, in line with national and international goals and targets;
- Commitment by all relevant bodies to a renewed campaign for resource mobilization at all levels, global and local, to provide more innovative and equitable formulas to resolve

the problem of human and financial resources of countries in the greatest need.

- 61.** The principle of **keeping pace with technological advancements**, which includes the following:
- Considering the rapid transformations in technology of communication as a supporting factor for the provision of education, starting from basic education. Among other things, technology helps in classifying learning objectives and determining the expected performance from learners, subdividing subject matters and facilitating their presentation, individualizing learning, assessing learning and analysing learner's performance, and conducting examinations, and using distant education to get access to populations in geographically remote areas;
  - Considering the use of technology, which includes, in addition to hardware and software, the use of Arabic and of foreign languages, as indispensable to help education meet the challenges of the new century.

## V. Objectives and orientations for implementation

- 62.** The Jomtien Framework for Action invited all Member States to develop their special goals and objectives in their efforts to meet the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults.
- 63.** The EFA mid-decade review meeting (Amman, 1996) emphasized five major areas of concern: improving learning achievement, mobilizing resources, developing partnerships, building national capacities and meeting the basic learning needs for all in the twenty-first century.
- 64.** With the end of the decade, it is necessary to acknowledge the difficulties facing education systems which have prevented the Jomtien goals from being achieved. Among these difficulties have been shortage of financial and human resources or their misallocation and waste, poor mobilization, the difficulties related to the management of a complex system such as education and the complexity of its relationship with other systems, the mismatch between the size of the pressure to meet the goals and the size of the exerted efforts, etc.
- 65.** The successes achieved should also be recognized and the commitment among the four major groups of partners that hold responsibility for achieving the goal in the future, i.e. governments, civil society, regional agencies and organizations, and international agencies and organizations renewed, and all have to set clear goals and objectives.

### Seven objectives

- 66.** Therefore, building on the Jomtien Declaration and the present needs of the Arab States, the new objectives and targets for achieving the ultimate goal of **education for all in the Arab States** could be re-defined for the coming years (2000–2010) as follows (these objectives allow for periodical assessment of the progress achieved):
- (1) **Expanded and improved early childhood care and development**, which includes, besides providing health care, nutrition and other basic social services to young children, providing them opportunities for learning and development at educational institutions with a view to fully developing their capacities including their physical, cognitive, creative and psycho-social abilities.
  - (2) **Extending basic education and its provision to achieve high quality education leading to excellence for all children, with special emphasis on those with special needs.** This requires ensuring compulsory basic education, supporting needy families in enrolling their children in schools, categorically prohibiting child employment, and providing for the inclusion in schools of all children, including those with special needs.
  - (3) **Extended opportunities for basic education and training programmes to acquire life and vocational skills for all youth and adults.** This includes enhancing the existing non-formal learning structures, developing new ones and providing diversified forms of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning for both males and females.
  - (4) **Universalizing literacy among adolescents, and decreasing illiteracy rates among adults** by setting realistic yet still ambitious targets, which would lead to significant progress.
  - (5) **Ensuring mastery of basic learning skills and excellence for all through the empowerment of all learners to attain outstanding achievement levels that make full use of their potential, starting with the mastery of basic skills, vocational and life skills, and attaining excellence in creativity and inventiveness.** This will require improving the quality of education in all its aspects, including teachers' qualifications and conditions of employment, curricula, teaching and assessment methods, and the learning environment.
  - (6) **Full equality and effective participation in basic education for girls and women, and the elimination of gender biases and disparities in all schools and education systems.**
  - (7) **Improving educational governance and management**, which entails improving decision-making processes, accountability systems, building capacities, and extending and strengthening partnerships in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Each state sets its own targets for each of these objectives in such a manner as to allow the assessment of the progress made, reviewing these targets periodically and modifying them according to new developments.

#### Five orientations for implementation:

**67.** Five orientations for implementation constitute the approaches to be adopted at the national level towards reaching the determined objectives.

**Orientation 1: Promote partnerships**, which includes the following mechanisms:

- Organizing the support provided by regional and international organizations, and by bilateral and multilateral co-operation in a concerted manner and orienting it according to national priorities;
- Greater participation of civil society in designing, implementing and monitoring basic education programmes, and allowing for the participation of the private sector, NGOs, local communities and religious foundations, in the achievement of EFA goals;
- Better co-operation, exchange of information, transparency, accountability and trust amongst all partners in the process of universalizing basic education.

**Orientation 2: Integrate programmes and projects**, through:

- Implementing integrated health, social and educational policies. Health problems can prevent children from attending school and from learning. Ensuring that children are healthy and able to learn is especially relevant to efforts to increase enrolment and learning achievement, i.e. it encourages the poorest and most disadvantaged children to attend school and to devote the needed efforts for success;
- Incorporating all programmes for the education of children, youth and adults into an integrated national vision and linking the educational plans to the economic and social development plans within the framework of sustainable development efforts and strategies. Also, employment policies based on training, education, and the eradication of illiteracy increase the value of learning in society, with its subsequent rewards;
- Ensuring synergies between the different programmes of education, considering that adult education affects the education of children and that expanding secondary education creates incentives to expanding enrolment in primary education;
- Using all available media and technological channels in coordination with the efforts exerted in education.

**Orientation 3: Promote knowledge-based decision-making and information for all.** This includes:

- Assessing curricular objectives, contents, teaching methods, forms of evaluation and activities, and examining the needs,

aspirations and achievements of each learner through scientific research, in order to take objective decisions thereon.

- Providing society with a clear picture of educational reality, after collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant data, in order to ensure societal accountability.

**Orientation 4: Mobilize all possible resources** through the enhancement of national investments in education, effective use of available human and material resources, and the mobilization of support from all concerned parties (the public sector, the private sector, the local communities, non-governmental organizations, bilateral and multilateral co-operation agencies and regional and international organizations) towards education for all.

**Orientation 5: Enhance management and monitoring efficiency**, which encompasses the following:

- Setting clear targets to be achieved at the national (and local) level, that reflect what had been agreed upon internationally and nationally, and any other commitments. These objectives should emphasize, along with quantitative aspects, the qualitative aspects, such as the levels of expected achievement in terms of knowledge and skills to be acquired, the quality of educational material and environment. These objectives must identify the categories that should receive priority;
- Designing and implementing schemes for the monitoring and assessment of curricula, and for the adjustment of processes;
- Developing the management systems, enhancing the qualifications of human resources, and building national capacities;
- Institutionalizing assessment and follow up;
- Rationalizing expenditure.

Each state is invited to develop a self-monitoring system of its commitment to each orientation proposed in this Framework for Action and of its implementation of these orientations, as well as the difficulties related to them.

## VI. Priorities

### Two priorities for all Arab States:

**68.** In view of the achievements of the Arab States collectively in the expansion of basic education (Objective 2), the problem occupying the first priority in the Arab Region as a whole is that of the quality of education. Therefore, and in accordance with the Cairo Declaration as well, **improving the quality of education is to be considered as the first priority in the Arab Framework for Action for meeting the goals of education for all at both quantitative and qualitative levels.** This means that Arab countries must aim at ensuring mastery of basic learning skills and excellence for all. In spite of all

efforts made to universalize basic education, the provision of a high-quality education remains a goal imposed by the sustainable development requirements, a positive attitude towards globalization, and the challenges of the world market competition and free trade. This priority encompasses all educational processes and skills, including the achievement by all learners of nationally defined and objectively measured levels of learning in literacy, numeracy and life skills, including technology skills, that entail open-mindedness, development of thinking, the desire for knowledge and the desire to seek knowledge from all sources. Within this priority, the emphasis goes to improving the teachers' status, including their qualifications and work conditions. The slogan for the coming years in the Arab States should be: teachers' empowerment, professionalization and training to reach the highest possible levels in scientific, professional and cultural specialization.

- 69.** In view of the limited human and financial resources available, it is of utmost importance in the Arab States to mobilize efforts and capabilities. That will require good governance and good management, both to assist in the achievement of the quality of education and other goals, and to ensure the implementation of the determined principles adopted in the Framework for Action. Therefore, **improving educational governance and management (Objective 7) can be considered as the second priority** in the Arab Region as a whole. This includes the development of education decision-support systems and building national capacities at central, regional, and local levels, to ensure the use of knowledge in decision-making at all these levels and in all educational endeavours, from policies to planning and management of operational activities, and from mobilization of resources to monitoring and assessment of results. Within this priority the emphasis would be in the coming years on **capacity-building**.

#### **Eradication of illiteracy: a top priority for national, regional and international mobilization**

- 70.** The Arab States, singly and jointly, are concerned with all objectives of the Arab Framework for Action. But, considering the massive and important problems facing them, whether in catching up with previous commitments or in meeting the demands of the coming century, the greatest problem for the Arab States is, in general, that of **illiteracy**. There are two reasons for this: the first relates to the number of illiterates in these countries (around 68 million, or 38.5 per cent of the population 15 years of age or older) and with the wide gender gap in literacy (Parity Index = 0.69). The second relates to the multiplier effect of literacy. Illiteracy among adults, especially women, lowers children's school enrolment and the educational achievement (quality of education) of those in school, and exacerbates failure and early school drop-out rates (effectiveness of education). Illiteracy is also associated with early marriage, high fertility and high infant mortality rates.

Illiteracy reinforces gender discrimination in society, while literacy helps improve the overall quality of life.

- 71.** Therefore, and in accordance with the Cairo Declaration (1994), **the eradication of illiteracy is today (in the year 2000) a high priority in the Arab States for national, regional and international mobilization of resources to achieve EFA goals (Objective 4)**. For, as stated in the Cairo Declaration: 'It is impossible to imagine the development and resurgence of the Arab world without putting an end to the problem of illiteracy in all the Arab countries.' Within this priority, the emphasis goes first to the **education of girls and women**.

#### **Two other priorities for Arab co-operation and national development**

- 72.** In view of the relative neglect of early childhood education in the Arab States and the potential of such education for the enhancement of learning achievement and improving internal efficiency in primary school, **early childhood care and development** deserves much more attention in the coming ten years, particularly in regional co-operation activities and among those states where illiteracy does not constitute a heavy burden. Efforts should be devoted both to the expansion and diversification of ECCD delivery services, and to the innovation and improvement of educational curricula, bearing in mind that early childhood care and development is not confined to pre-schooling but includes care given by the whole family from birth onwards.
- 73.** In parallel to the above-mentioned priorities, efforts should be made to diversify delivery systems of educational services to youth and adults, in order to broaden educational opportunities. The enormous potential of new information and communication technologies should be exploited at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. In terms of educational methods, priority should be given to the **development of a multimedia environment to be used both for formal and non-formal education**, encouraging the investment in cultural industries related to teaching/learning activities.

#### **Each Arab State has its own national priorities**

- 74.** The aforementioned sets of priorities apply to the Arab States as a whole, but it is difficult to apply to them individually. In fact, some states are close to overcoming the problem of illiteracy and the gender gap related to it. These include Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait and Lebanon, followed by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic. For other countries, illiteracy remains the number one challenge, and these include Egypt, the Sudan, Morocco, Mauritania and Yemen, followed by Tunisia, Algeria, Djibouti, Iraq and Oman. This discrepancy

in positions changes the scale of priorities from one group to another. The same should be said about early childhood education, where Kuwait and Lebanon are approaching full enrolment.

75. In all cases, each country is called upon to define its priorities and their sequence of importance according to the problems facing it and to review these priorities in a periodical manner according to what has been achieved. This is a necessary step to define the plan of action in each country and, in that light, to define the extent of Arab regional and international co-operation.

## VII. Arab regional and international co-operation

### Increasing the efficiency of Arab co-operation

76. The Arab Region is composed of twenty-one states, most of which share a common language and a common culture. Furthermore, and more important, they are bonded by a sense of belonging to one nation, in that what besets one state affects the others, and by a sense of combined strength of will for the general progress of the Arab nation. A condition for that progress is the achievement of the goals of education for all, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

77. Arab States are also brought together by Arab regional organizations concerned with the issues of co-ordination and co-operation among the different states. In the year 2000, the Arab States will renew their commitments for co-operation and their faith in its returns for all. The disparity in development levels is an additional incentive for the establishment of that co-operation. Achieving the education for all goals will be the product of their individual and collective efforts.

78. This co-operation will take place mainly through two channels:
- Bilateral and multi-lateral relations, where the exchange of information and experiences takes place, where assistance is provided, agreements are concluded, and the flow of human resources and investments is encouraged;
  - Networks, and regional and sub-regional organizations (ALECSO, ISESCO, ABEGS, AGFUND) which develop joint programmes and projects in co-operation with international organizations, and provide technical information and expertise.

79. In view of the experience of the past decade where the achievements of the Arab States, collectively and individually, did not meet the requirements, the Arab States are invited to do the following:

- (1) Assess the previous co-operation experiences through the two above-mentioned channels, to enhance co-operation in the coming years and extend the benefits derived from co-operation on everyone, including the establishment of specialized regional centres, joint programmes and projects, as well as common lists of learning competencies expected from learners.
- (2) Renew the mobilization of bilateral and multilateral co-operation. This requires that each country lists its priorities for co-operation, in terms of partners, as well as in terms of types of co-operation, capabilities to assist and the areas where assistance is needed. More developed countries are called upon to provide assistance for less developed countries.
- (3) Strengthen Arab organizations, specialized regional centres, and Arab networks and programmes. This will involve enhancing the capacities of these agencies and helping them direct their activities towards more assistance for needier countries.
- (4) Consider efforts to address shortcomings in the achievement of the set objectives of basic education in any state of the Region as a joint Arab responsibility.

### Increasing the benefit of Arab-international co-operation

80. In their approach to co-operation with international institutions and organizations, especially those located in the Arab region, the Arab States should refer to the Jomtien Declaration concerning international co-operation:

- (1) **'Meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility. It requires international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities. All nations have valuable knowledge and experiences to share in designing effective educational policies and programmes.'**
- (2) **'Substantial and long-term increases in resources for basic education will be needed. The world community, including governmental agencies and institutions, has an urgent responsibility to alleviate the constraints that prevent some countries from achieving the goals of education for all.'**

81. Arab States should also refer to the Jomtien Framework for Action on action priorities at the international level. These include:

- 1) 'Enhancing national capacities' for designing and managing programmes and services for basic education;
- 2) 'Providing sustained long-term support for national and regional actions', which includes providing 'increased international funding . . . to help the less developed countries implement their own autonomous plans for action in line with the expanded vision of basic Education for All';
- 3) 'Providing technical assistance on policy issues.'

82. Therefore, taking into consideration the experience of the past decade, Arab States call upon the international community to do the following:

- **Renew the international commitment to provide financial assistance to the less developed Arab States** that are unable, with their own resources and with those provided by Arab co-operation, to fulfil the requirements for achieving the education for all goals within the coming ten years;
- **Renew the commitment of international agencies and organizations**, especially those sponsoring the Arab Regional Conference on Education for All (Cairo), and those participating in the World Education Forum (Dakar), **to provide sustained and long-term assistance for national and Arab regional activities**, especially those linked to developing national capacities and to designing and implementing priority strategies, plans, programmes and projects for education.

83. For their part, Arab States will renew their commitment for positive interaction with international agencies and organizations, under the banner of the Jomtien Declaration, especially in the area of knowledge development and database construction. They will undertake periodical assessment studies on education in these states, in line with the goals and orientations adopted in this Arab Framework for Action.

## VIII. Designing national autonomous plans for action

84. The EFA 2000 Assessment allowed each Arab State to recognize its decade's achievements and what it was unable to achieve. It helped each state to understand what prevented it from achieving the EFA goals. These countries are invited to perform such an assessment in a periodic manner.

85. The Arab Framework provides a guide for each country to work towards achieving its own targets based upon the principles, objectives, strategies, priorities and forms of Arab and international co-operation set out in this document.

86. Each Arab State is now called upon to determine a time frame for future action, identifying specific targets to be achieved by the year 2010. These targets should be phased so that at the end of each phase a new assessment could be made of what has and what has not been achieved.

87. In this respect, each Arab State is invited to define, according to its own circumstances and possibilities, the upper and lower limits that it shall strive to attain with regard to each individual EFA objective contained in this Framework for Action. It is also called upon to enshrine its commitments in official and public texts.

88. Defining objectives and targets to achieve requires more than political will and intentions. It also requires educational and scientific research reflecting the actual educational situation and examining possible action alternatives, including governance and management methods, centralization versus decentralization, public versus private sector, role of the civil society, sources of local, national, regional and international funding, forms and direction for co-operation, etc. At this stage, national stakeholders should initiate and maintain the necessary communication with other states and organizations, and survey the local human and financial resources so that planning for maximal mobilization of resources and capacities can be undertaken in a realistic manner. Based on all this, the minimum and maximum thresholds for achievement can be defined for each of the seven objectives mentioned in this Framework for Action.

89. Therefore, the Arab States are called upon to meet again in 2002 in a regional Arab Ministerial Conference, the subject of which would be education for all in the Arab States – targets for 2010. At this meeting, the Arab States, and the Arab and international organizations, could deliberate on the orientation of the national plans within the context of Arab and international support and co-operation.

90. The regional organizations and the international community are called upon to assist all Arab States to develop their autonomous plans for achieving the goals of education for all, in preparation of the Ministerial Conference proposed for 2002. ■



## Asia and Pacific Regional Framework for Action: Education for All Guiding Principles, Specific Goals and Targets for 2015

Adopted by the Asia-Pacific Conference  
on EFA 2000 Assessment  
Bangkok, Thailand, 17-20 January 2000





## Introduction

During the Asia-Pacific Conference on EFA 2000 Assessment, 17 to 20 January, 2000, the Regional Drafting Committee produced the Draft Outline of the Asia and Pacific Regional Framework for Action: Education for All. The Draft Outline document drew on the following information:<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ the Draft Dakar Framework for Action, Preliminary Discussion Document (5 November 1999);
- ▶ the Asia-Pacific Region Draft Synthesis Report;
- ▶ the four Sub-Regional Draft Synthesis Reports; and
- ▶ points raised during the Plenary sessions on 17 and 20 January and the Sub-Regional Meetings on 18 and 19 January, 2000.

On the final day of the Conference, all delegates received a copy of the Draft Outline of the Asia and Pacific Regional Framework for Action: Education for All and were asked to make further suggestions and comments. In subsequent weeks, the Regional Technical Advisory Group's Secretariat received forty-three submissions from Education Ministries, United Nations Agencies and non-governmental organizations throughout the region. All of the submissions were considered when constructing this document; many suggestions have been simply incorporated into the Draft Outline, while other comments have been listed in the Appendix, Asia and Pacific Regional Framework for Action - Additional Concerns.

## I. Preamble

Education is a fundamental human right of all people – of value in and of itself, for improving the quality of life, and as an essential part of social and human development. The provision of basic education, whether it be formally or non-formally delivered, is a core responsibility of the state with active and genuine collaboration of parents, communities, and civil society. All people, especially those most disadvantaged and excluded,<sup>2</sup> must be guaranteed access to a basic education of decent quality.

## II. The gains

- Increase in primary school enrolment
- Expansion of early childhood care and education programmes
- Higher priority given to quality

<sup>1</sup>. Some delegates suggested that ten years may be a better timeframe for assessment, rather than the fifteen years suggested in the Draft Dakar Framework for Action.

<sup>2</sup>. For the purpose of this document, excluded groups include the poor, ethnic minority groups, remote populations, the displaced, people affected by civil unrest or emergency, child workers and people with disabilities, whether they be physical, intellectual or emotional.

- Increase in functional adult literacy
- Improvement in educational management information systems
- Increase in national budgets for basic education
- Effective use of existing resources
- Increase in 'international' assistance to basic education
- Increase in the number of legislative measures, campaigns, projects and reforms in basic education
- More innovative initiatives in basic education
- More partnership between the private sector and civil society

## III. The challenges<sup>3</sup>

- Growing disparities within countries, particularly a persistent urban/rural gap
- Persistent gender gap against girls, especially in South Asia
- Relative lack of emphasis on alternative, non-formal approaches to basic education and lack of interest in workplace education<sup>4</sup>
- While much emphasis is placed on getting children into school, not enough attention is paid to the retention rate nor to the completion of schooling
- Urban bias of early childhood programmes
- Continuing shortfalls in national education budgets, especially for countries in economic crisis and in transition, and in relation to school-age population growth
- Continuing shortfalls in international resources for basic education
- Weakness in identifying, refining, and expanding best practices in basic education
- Difficulty in re-casting curricula to address the new risks and challenges facing youth in the region
- Inability to implement the required management reforms for the education systems of countries in transition
- Lack of broad participation of communities and local leadership in management and delivery of education
- Lack of reliable data and statistics
- Increasing the visibility of people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups
- Disruption or cessation of basic education provisions, facilities and support as a result of national or sub-national armed conflict or emergency
- Lack of capacity to assess educational problems and contributing factors
- Limited testing, assessment and evaluation processes for learning often isolated from previous learning experiences

<sup>3</sup>. The point was raised that the challenges be ordered according to importance, though of course this is entirely subjective.

<sup>4</sup>. Some delegates suggested that this sentence be rephrased in a more positive way, expanded on (see Appendix, par. III) and be included as a Strategic Objective, rather than as a challenge.

- The (still) large number of illiterates in the region and the challenge of delivering meaningful and relevant literacy programmes to people living in different social, economic and political circumstances
- Inadequate means of assessing learning performance and achievement
- Disparities between big countries and small island states

## IV. Regional objectives and strategies

### A. Goals

#### 1. Early childhood care and education (ECCE)<sup>5</sup>

At all stages of life, children should be provided with quality, comprehensive, integrated care and education. Child-centred, family-focused, community-based, holistic care and education of pre-school children is essential for securing the well-being and rights of all children, and should be supported by national policies and sufficient funds. This should be the result of synergistic partnership among families, communities, civil society, NGOs and the government.

ECCE programmes, whether they be family or community based, or linked to schools or learning centres, must focus on caring for and educating the whole child, from birth to school entry. These programmes must promote the child's optimum physical, psycho-social, emotional, cognitive and linguistic development in ways that are culturally and socially relevant.

Investments in capacity-building to improve the quality of care and education through the diverse programme options and services for young children and families are critical. Improved data-gathering and analysis of both programme access and quality indicators, regular monitoring of programme implementation and regulatory frameworks linked to both local and national systems are essential.

ECCE programmes should remain flexible and adaptable to the needs of pre-school children and not become mere extensions of formal school systems. In addition, they should be developmentally appropriate and responsive to the needs and interests of children, and should be firmly anchored on the family and community as the child's primary caring and learning environment.

<sup>5</sup> Some participants mentioned that Early Childhood Care and Development was a more appropriate term.

#### 2. Universal basic education

All must have the opportunity to receive a basic education of good quality that focuses on the 'whole' person, including health, nutrition and cognitive and psycho-social development.<sup>6</sup> In order for this to happen, education systems must be able to adapt to the individual needs of child, youth and adult learners, by incorporating formal and non-formal approaches and programmes within an integrated and inclusive system of basic education.

A strong and serious commitment must be made to include the excluded. Clearer analyses must be made of reasons for exclusion, including issues such as language of instruction, and there must be more innovative approaches made to address these reasons.

Greater, more explicit focus and commitment must be given to the identification of unreached children who are not in school and to the promotion of innovative and varied approaches by government and NGOs to meet their diverse educational needs.

There is a need to improve demand as well as increase supply through the closer collaboration and genuine involvement of parents, communities and the private sector in education.

There is also a need to mitigate the direct and indirect costs of basic education, especially for the disadvantaged. In order to achieve universal basic education, systems must become more internally and externally efficient, and focus more sharply on retaining children in school.

#### 3. Basic learning and skills programmes<sup>7</sup>

There have been impressive gains in children's, youth and adult literacy in the region, especially for girls and women. These, nonetheless, remain fragile and need constant re-inforcement and recommitment.

Conflict, violence, social injustice and other risks affect the lives of people in almost every country in the region. Basic education must focus increasingly on developing skills and capacities for life and work in a rapidly changing world. Values and cultural identity and their preservation must continue to find a prominent place in all learning programmes and teaching practices.

<sup>6</sup> A point of contention was whether a 'good' education could be quantified and how many years constituted a 'good' education. Bangladesh suggested that good quality should include at least eight years of education, whereas the Maldives want ten. Other countries, for example the Lao People's Democratic Republic, did not agree to this and felt it should be left to the country to decide what constituted a 'good' education. It really depended on country-specific goals and the level of development in the country.

<sup>7</sup> Other titles – 'Linking Literacy and Skills Programmes' and 'Adult Literacy and Skills Programmes' – were suggested.

So, too, basic literacy and numeracy skills must be developed in the context of relevant life skills – whether these be work-related or address any of the risks increasingly confronting children, youth and adults. Such programmes should adopt participatory, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive and integrated approaches to peace education and conflict resolution, gender relations, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS education.

There is also a need to integrate functional education into equivalency programmes to provide opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults to gain access to relevant and meaningful learning programmes leading to educational certification.

#### 4. Learning achievement<sup>8</sup>

Improvement in the quality of education is critical to economic and social development, and is therefore a national imperative. Approaches to improving the quality of education require adoption of curriculum content and processes that are learner centred, recognize the diversity of learning needs and stages of cognitive, social and emotional development, and develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for independent learning and problem-solving. Improving the quality of education also requires access to appropriate learning resources. Assessment strategies at all levels should reflect such changing emphases, especially the focus on learning how to learn, and include appropriately diverse, continuous and responsive assessment strategies. Training of teachers and educational managers is required to support curriculum reforms and should include modalities which strengthen teacher monitoring and support mechanisms which ensure continuity of reform.

#### 5. Education of women and girls and the elimination of gender disparities

It is essential to eliminate systemic gender disparities, where they persist, amongst girls and boys throughout the education system – in enrolment, achievement and completion; in teacher training and career development; in curriculum, and learning practices and learning processes. This requires better appreciation of the role of education as an instrument of women's equality and empowerment.

Furthermore, specific measures should be taken to ensure the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all educational processes.

<sup>8</sup>. Other titles – 'Quality of Learning' or 'Learning Achievement and Quality of Education' – were proposed.

Where possible, also, specific programmes, both formal and non-formal in approach, should be developed to target the increased enrolment, retention and completion of education by girls and women.

#### 6. Literacy and continuing education<sup>9</sup>

Via the support of literacy campaigns, the goal of universal literacy should be aspired to in the next decade.

#### 7. Life skills and values: education for peace and global understanding<sup>10</sup>

The education system should strive to address issues of peace, order and socio-political cohesion. Whether school-based or delivered non-formally, basic learning tools should increase the capacities of learners to deal with issues of day-to-day survival, to resolve community conflict and to enjoy human, political and civil rights to a greater extent.

### B. Strategic objectives

#### 1. Investment and resource mobilization

Lack of resources is often a matter of political will, both within national governments and among international funding agencies. Both must continue to increase the absolute and relative size of their budgets devoted to basic education (without sacrificing needed resources for higher levels of education) and to push for more rapid debt relief and new funding mechanisms to complement existing resources directed towards education and health, if necessary through the transfer of budget allocation from the defense sector. Money saved through increased efficiency must continue to be reinvested in education systems and not subtracted from the overall allocation for education.

Special attention and support should be given to the most-excluded and least-accessible people in each country, and those suffering the consequences of armed conflict, civil displacement and natural disasters. The needs of these people should be continually reassessed and the necessary actions defined and taken.

In addition, education policy-making must assume a more central position in public policy dialogue and decision-making. There must be greater recognition of the interconnectedness of public policy issues so that the effects of actions taken in one sector on other sectors are clearly understood. This implies a need for more integrated processes and governmental mechanisms for public policy-

<sup>9</sup>. This additional goal was suggested.

<sup>10</sup>. This additional goal was suggested.

planning and a balancing of the influence of Treasury and Finance ministries with the advice of Ministries of Education, Health, Social Welfare, Labour and Regional Development.

## 2. New opportunities for civil society

The need to broaden the way education is conceptualized, implemented and evaluated requires the greater involvement of NGOs, the media, the private sector and other civil society stakeholders – including families and children – at all levels and all stages of education programme development.

To reach EFA goals, we must ensure that genuine decision-making responsibilities are shared among all elements of society. The strong trend toward decentralization has important implications in terms of the provision of adequate support from the centre and the transfer of both responsibility and decision-making authority to all levels in the administrative hierarchy. The latter requires both a more localized EMIS and stronger management training at lower levels of the system.

More effective collaboration and equal partnership between governments and NGOs must be encouraged. A commitment has already been made between NGOs and governments in the region to create new opportunities for genuine engagement and dialogue, bringing to the partnership strength in innovation, participatory processes, critical analysis, social mobilization, and school-community partnerships – but not at the risk of 'user pay' scenarios, polarized education systems and the increased exclusion of disadvantaged children.

## 3. Education and poverty elimination

Attempts must be made to ensure stronger linkages between education policies and programmes, poverty alleviation strategies and public policy-making. A strong focus must be placed on more and better education for excluded groups, culturally appropriate and cognitively stimulating early-childhood care, and education for girls and women, as well as education for life skills and employment.

In addition, the EFA process at all levels must be made barrier-free in attitudinal, informational and physical terms so that people with disabilities and socially disadvantaged groups can participate meaningfully in EFA activities.

Decentralized micro-planning and delivery with people's participation may be utilized on a wider scale for provision of basic education to unserved and underserved populations. NGOs working for the underprivileged should receive support and assistance on a sustainable basis.

## 4. Equitable harnessing of new technologies

The information and telecommunication technologies of the twenty-first century offer new ways of managing the educational processes as well as delivering particular programmes. The ability to access and analyse data and information about formal and non-formal education, and about the community context in which education takes place, encourages better decision-making at local levels. At other levels, policy decisions about technology can be taken to enhance equity and reduce disparities between groups within society at large.

Such technologies can also help to deliver learning programmes at adult and professional levels, such as teacher education through distance education. Further study may be required to see where such technologies are cost-effective in serving the learning needs of children, youth and adults more widely.

In many parts of the region, learning is increasingly taking place in an informal, media-based context. This wealth of information resources must be accessible by **all**, and the growing disparity between rich and poor, and the urban/rural divide in terms of access to technology must be taken into account when policies about technology are formulated. In addition, these information resources must be accessible in an equitable and structured way to ensure overall improvement in learning achievement. Information resources should in particular be accessible to people with sensory impairments and in a format that permits ready assimilation of content. Further, the deployment of technology in basic education should be done in a culturally sensitive manner.

Governments must promote popular access to relevant media and technology systems, and incorporate media and technology as both a learning tool and as an interface for the expansion of information dissemination critical to better management.

## 5. Enabling teachers and learning facilitators

Public perceptions of teachers and teaching must be enhanced; incentives to identify, attract and retain good teachers must be provided; for example, policies should be in place to protect teachers' salaries, rights and welfare. In addition, strong and ongoing teacher, supervisor and manager support and professional development services, at the level of the school and classroom, must be introduced. Teachers themselves must be more genuinely involved in decisions that affect their work. Adequate time and investment must be given to re-train the existing teacher workforce and to reform pre- and in-service training.

The role of teachers and learning is changing in the new decade and is crucial in the fulfilment of the goals of Education for All. New contexts – including new challenges – in which teachers and their learners operate must be clearly understood. Above all, teachers must be able to make learning environments more inclusive and welcoming to children – healthier, more effective and more nurturing.

Adequate learning materials, textbooks, teaching aids and supplemental readers are critical to educating all children. They should reflect learning outcomes and the time available for instruction in the classroom. Values and subject content should be gender-fair and reflective of acceptance of diversity and cultural differences. Policy should foster the development and adaptation of learning experiences and materials to ensure social and cultural relevance for learners.

## 6. Education management reform<sup>11</sup>

Increased emphasis on decentralization of education management should be accompanied by the development of enhanced and comprehensive EMISs that provide timely, relevant, accurate and valid information for local decision-making. Locally relevant indicators compatible with national standards and curriculum frameworks, and that cover quantitative and qualitative aspects of learning, must be developed and monitored. The accountability of the school system to learners themselves, to parents and to communities should be emphasized.

Effective decentralization also requires extensive training of school leaders and local managers, both at the institutional level and in district and provincial offices. Decentralization of authority and responsibility that is supported by improved EMISs and management training will lead to greater accountability and transparency in the allocation and utilization of resources. At the central level, enhancement of EMISs will increase the capacity of policy-makers to model the effects of proposed policy reforms as a basis for policy dialogue aimed at identifying optimal linkages between resource inputs and education outputs.

In addition, mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that managers and policy-makers have access to the latest information and research in the field of education.

## 7. Integration of development activities

Partnership between government, non-government and donors/non-government organizations should encompass policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

<sup>11</sup> It was suggested that Strategic Objective 6 be expanded to cover not only EMIS, but other aspects of education management, for example, reforms in general systems of management and institutional management and delivery systems.

## 8. Exchange of information, experience and innovations

With the increasing availability of communication technologies in the region, governments and all stakeholders must promote an equitable exchange of information and experiences about educational innovations that have been, and continue to be, successfully developed by countries and communities in the region. This exchange should cover a wide range of educational dimensions: policy reform, planning and management, resource mobilization, curriculum, teacher training, measurement and evaluation, community participation and linkages between education and poverty alleviation. As a means of exchanging information and experiences, subregional resource centres could be set up in each country.

## Appendix

# Asia and Pacific Regional Framework for Action: Additional concerns

I. Comments were received about the language of the Draft Framework for Action. These comments highlighted the need for stronger and more action-oriented language. Feedback received on the Draft Framework for Action pointed out that it failed to offer mechanisms for translating the vision into reality, it did not outline the new commitments from the partner agencies UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO and the World Bank, and nor did it propose new directions for the future. Some went further, urging that a statement, acknowledging that some of the commitments and promises made at Jomtien were not achieved, be added to the Dakar Framework for Action.

II. Continuing education for lifelong learning was highlighted by a number of participants, notably APPEAL, as being an important goal if a society is to truly become a learning society. After the completion of basic literacy, it was recommended that post-literacy and continuing education be provided in order to sustain and expand literacy skills.

III. Emphasis must be placed on continuing education for the newly literate and on including in this continuing education the means of achieving scientific and technological literacy.

IV. Scientific and technological illiteracy was highlighted as a concern in the region, as well as the need for adequate teacher training in science and technology.

**V.** Non-formal education should be developed in quality, comparable with the formal education sector, leading to the establishment of an equivalency programme. Furthermore, non-formal education should be given institutional shape.

**VI.** Much debate was centred on the meaning and concept of 'quality education'. A suggestion was made that the EFA Forum promote measures and indicators of quality that are common to both formal and non-formal modalities of learning, focusing on competencies, aptitudes and functionality of the things learners learn and how they can apply them to their day-to-day existence.

**VII.** Although many argued for basic education to cater to the needs of disabled people, the fact remains that data on the educational experiences of disabled people remain difficult to access. One way of rectifying this situation could be to include the issue of disability as an indicator in all future country assessments.

**VIII.** Children's participation in the Education for All process should be encouraged, considering that childhood is the time when most people begin formal basic education.

**IX.** Care must be taken, however, not to place too much emphasis on child learners at the expense of adult learners. Learning is a lifelong process, and the language of the Dakar Framework for Action must be inclusive of all learners, whether young or old. Likewise, care should be exercised with official EFA documents, pronouncements and pictures, so as not to convey the false impression that EFA is only about children.

**X.** Attention must be given to the learning needs of adolescents.

**XI.** The Dakar Declaration must state in very clear terms whether secondary education will form part of basic education that should be universalized.

**XII.** Aside from the concern for access of those not in school, a concern for quality, relevance and content of basic education for those already in school was also expressed. It was felt that a fundamental re-examination of the curriculum and content of all forms of basic education was called for to meet the learning needs of a more complex and interconnected society in the future.

**XIII.** The structural reform of a country's basic education system could be viewed as an economic and effective way of meeting that country's EFA objectives. Consideration of structural reform is particularly pertinent in those countries where the projected rate of growth of the school-age population over the next ten years far exceeds any reasonable expectation concerning the rate of growth of public expenditure on basic education. Many countries would, understandably, be reluctant to attempt to meet the implied funding gap over the next decade by taking up further education loans from either the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank because of the additional burden it placed on their capacity to service such foreign debt. ■



## Regional Framework for Action Europe and North America

Adopted by the Conference on Education for All  
in Europe and North America  
Warsaw, Poland, 6-8 February 2000



## Preamble

At the invitation of UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank, government representatives of thirty-nine European and North American countries, and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations met in Warsaw from 6 to 8 February 2000. The participants read and took note of the preliminary document concerning the action framework to be adopted at the World Education Forum (Dakar). Discussion was based on the report presented by the Consultative Forum on Education for All, a report based on contributions from thirty-one countries, as well as on two syntheses: one on Central and Eastern Europe, and the other produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on its member countries.

Ten years ago, the Jomtien Conference asserted the need to implement the right to education that was provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to meet basic educational needs in each country in the world. Over the past decade all European countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A number of international conferences have since then repeatedly insisted on the importance of basic education in social and economic development. The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) fixed 2015 as the ultimate date for Universal Primary Education and this is now the time reference for the EFA movement.

Learning and the learner are at the heart of lifelong learning, itself a cyclical, episodic and continuous concept that involves both intended and unanticipated episodes of learning of both informal and formal nature. Basic education is a part of lifelong learning. The importance of valuing the learners' experiences in order to create both the curriculum and opportunities for learning is paramount: education from all as well as for all. Participation in learning builds self-confidence, citizenship and autonomy.

## Evolution over the past ten years

Throughout the world, the trend is towards the development of free market economies and globalization; this is accompanied by an awareness of the importance of education and training. For most of our countries, common characteristics include declining demographic trends. This in turn increases the importance of the quality of education, be it for children, youth or adults of all ages, and the need for education throughout life.

The Jomtien assertions have not always been properly taken into account in Europe and North America: basic education was considered to have been implemented, since primary and lower secondary education were practically universal. However, although our region remains the one in which the outcomes of basic education are the closest to the Jomtien 'enlarged vision', the past decade has been marked by regressions and difficulties linked in particular to an increase in social inequities and violence, and in some countries to war.

In the Eastern part of the European continent, the political and economic system is being transformed. However, from a basic education viewpoint, the transition of these countries towards the free market economy has not been positive:

- in financial terms, in most cases there has been a reduction in expenditure on education;
- in terms of quality and non-discrimination for teachers, whose salary levels have led them to seek supplementary resources; for pedagogical equipment, in particular textbooks and computers; and for teaching conditions related to teaching premises and their facilities;
- in terms of equity, the increased contribution requested from families and from local communities is leading to inequality to the detriment of the most underprivileged families and of the poorest areas, in particular rural areas. In the context of societies where social inequalities are increasing, this is especially true with the education of young children, whether it concerns access to educational institutions or parents' available resources.

These difficulties have not significantly reduced the percentage of children in full-time education, which remains high, despite a slight decline in a number of cases. However, in the long term they are certain to have a negative influence on the results obtained.

In West Europe and North America, an already universal schooling in primary and lower secondary education has provided a basis for development drives on the other levels. Educational expenditure has continued to increase, in line with GDP and often more rapidly. The education of young children has been reinforced in many countries, even though situations remain quite varied.

However, in Central and Eastern European countries, concern has been expressed with respect to quality and non-discrimination. Disturbing signs are emerging: increase in numbers of drop-outs; low motivation of a number of pupils resulting in endemic truancy; weaker performance of the most disadvantaged pupils – 10 per cent, 20 per cent, sometimes more – who do not have access to the level required, in particular, for satisfactory work integration; and development of social exclusion phenomena, of disaffiliation, of drug addiction, of violence, at increasingly young ages. Not only has progress failed significantly to reduce inequality in education according to social, geographical and



ethnic origin, but the gap is widening between the majority of young people and a fringe made up by children from the most underprivileged backgrounds with increasing difficulties. This gap also exists among adults, in particular those who have no professional qualification or who are functionally illiterate.

European and North American countries have a responsibility towards the regions of the world where education is less widespread. They meet this responsibility by means of co-operation and development provided in bilateral and multilateral forms. In the field of education, this assistance appears now to focus more on basic education. However, despite the commitments for increases declared by Heads of States at Jomtien and Copenhagen, the level of the aid has decreased over the last decade.

## Shaping the vision

The World Declaration on Education for All called for an expanded vision and a renewed commitment, by stating the objective of basic education in its Article I. It can be summarized as allowing women and men to develop their personal potential to achieve intellectual autonomy, integrate into society and take part in society's development.

Integration into a society depends on the nature of the society. Education therefore has a national aspect, and even sometimes a sub-national aspect. According to the Jomtien Declaration, 'The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time.'

For the past ten years, we have been increasingly aware of a stronger and stronger interaction between countries, influenced by technical evolution and the sharing of ideas: this is the phenomenon known as globalization. It is characterized, by, among other things, the fundamental importance of knowledge, so as to allow change, and education, so as to make the change acceptable. The evolution mentioned in the Jomtien Declaration should therefore lead to a convergence in levels of education for the countries in the world. However, an education system cannot be severed from its historical, cultural, religious and linguistic roots, which our fellow citizens consider as essential, no doubt in reaction to the threat of loss of identity that globalization can represent.

To ensure sustainable and peaceful development in North American and European countries, renewed emphasis is required on 'learning to live together' in the Education for All context. This should enable individuals to better understand themselves and others, and to contribute to the world's progress towards a unity respectful of and founded on creative diversity. In this context, renewed efforts to fight racism, ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia are needed.

Education for democratic citizenship concerns not only the teaching of democratic norms but essentially the development of reflective and creative persons. It is based on the understanding that democracy is not fixed and immutable, but rather that it must be built and rebuilt every day in every society. Over the past ten years, our countries have joined together in the will to form democratic societies; for such societies, the future is to be invented and built; the mission of education is to prepare future citizens so that they can take part in this initiative.

In the past, basic education was defined in terms of an obligation fixed by the state and covering the childhood period, and therefore meant primary school. Today, such a definition has several deficiencies:

- with the development of knowledge and of its influence on the lives of people, basic education takes more time: in our countries, it covers at least lower secondary education and touches other levels;
- basic education cannot be defined solely by an obligatory duration, but must now be defined in terms of outcomes;
- basic education should indeed become an 'education for everybody' regardless of age, social and economic background, gender and residence, founded on the respect for difference. The problems to be solved concern those who do not reach the level required for successful integration into working life and who cannot take part in social development; children who fail often come from very underprivileged families and, conversely, failure in school often leads to social exclusion; and the solution to these problems is therefore closely linked to anti-poverty strategies;
- the definition of basic education is no longer fixed by the state alone: in many cases, the expectations of society and of families, and the economy, along with the supply of knowledge from outside of the formal education system, have led to the evolution of educational duration and content;
- because as society is rapidly changing, each individual needs lifelong learning: learning how to learn is seen as a fundamental skill for all. The expanding area of adult basic education for out-of-school children, youth and adults is essential to achieving learning throughout life.

The foundation of this process begins at birth. Early childhood education and care must be holistic and integrated to ensure the survival, growth and development of young child. In particular, more attention should be paid to young children under 3 years old, children in difficult and emergent situations and in rural areas for their participation in and access to quality early childhood programmes.

The primary child caretakers are parents, and the family and community environment plays an important role. In this regard, an effort to link early childhood education and care with adult education deserves attention. The learning that parents and grandparents do enhances the learning that children do. In turn, the success or failure of learning at school has an impact on how adults learn later on in their lives. The vision, provision, policy and

system of early childhood education and care can vary across countries, but there is a growing consensus that some form of early childhood programme focusing on the child's holistic development is essential to favour the social, psychological, affective and cognitive development of the young child.

## Three levels of action

### *In each country*

#### 1. Definition of basic education

The definition of basic education must be in terms of levels to be attained, and knowledge and skills to be acquired along the lines of the Jomtien 'enlarged vision', not in terms of a period of compulsory school education.

Basic education allows personal development, intellectual autonomy, integration into professional life and participation in the development of the society in the context of democracy. In order to achieve these aims, basic education must lead to the acquisition of:

- key skills used as personal development tools and, later on, as a basis for lifelong learning;
- initial vocational guidance;
- the knowledge, values and abilities that are needed for individual development, and for the exercise of participatory and responsible citizenship in a democracy.

#### 2. Operational goals for 2015

- All young women and men achieve basic education as defined in their country, through their initial education.
- Young people and adults who have not achieved the set level of basic education, or who have lost the corresponding skills, are offered the means to undergo training in order to attain this level; in particular promotion of literacy is an essential task.
- In the framework of their right to education, children of at least 3 are offered access to pre-primary education on request from their parents.

#### 3. Strategies

##### 3.1. National action plan

Develop, in consultation with all stakeholders, a national action plan with precise goals and objectives, and agreed milestones for assessing progress. This plan should include and deal with very precise questions on all aspects of curriculum. It will pay particular attention to the right of disadvantaged groups to education.

##### 3.2. Allocation of resources

The investment level currently dedicated to education, despite decreasing demographic trends, must be maintained; and if reductions have been made in the level of educational expenditure since 1990, investment should be increased to what it was then. Benchmark resources are needed to increase the efficiency in the use of resources.

Education should be given high priority, and not less than 6 per cent of a country's GNP should be devoted to education, as recommended by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors.

##### 3.3. Equitable allocations

Ensure that the allocation of public resources for education across sub-sectors and communities serve to reduce inequities in access and quality rather than to exacerbate them, particularly through the use of positive discrimination measures.

##### 3.4. Effective partnerships

Set up the institutional and legal formulas to ensure a real sharing of responsibility among the various levels (central, regional and local) of public authorities responsible for education.

Promote effective and formal partnerships between school-teachers, families, communities, civil society, employers, voluntary bodies, social services and political authorities. This is particularly important for excluded groups: parents must have the possibility to express the difficulties that hinder the educational success of their children and to take part in the definition of solutions so as to achieve this success. Education for democratic citizenship also relies on effective partnership in order to ensure commitment of the whole of society to prevent racism and xenophobia. Partnerships alone allow taking advantage of all the opportunities society provides for learning, especially to ensure that all adults have a right to education. Many adults never participate in learning opportunities after leaving school. Education for all must address this. The development of the International Adult Learners' Week (September 2000) following on from International Literacy Day is one way of encouraging participation in adult learning, increasing international solidarity.

Moreover, partnership contributes to linking education to working life; and to take full advantage of the changing employment environment that community service provides for increasing opportunities for employment (not necessary paid or fully paid employment) and the student's need to be aware of this. Career guidance and consulting services for both young people and adults need strengthening.

### 3.5. Address specific issues

Identify a specific set of problem issues and develop strategies to address them. The experience of the past decade in this region suggests that these might include identifying children excluded from basic education (rural children, disabled children, girls, street children, ethnic minorities and children affected by conflict or HIV/AIDS), and implementing flexible and creative programmes to restore their right to basic education.

Promising directions include:

- more opportunities for teachers' initiative, creativity and decision-making;
- more attention to cultivating a positive attitude to learning;
- a focus on general skills, life skills and competencies;
- rethinking the content and organization of general education by relating it to contemporary life and student interests;
- improving the quality of education by ensuring that schools are healthy for children, effective with children and protective of children. This implies a broader definition of quality that includes addressing the quality of learners (health, nutrition, etc.), the quality of the curricula including assessment and materials, the quality of the learning process (teachers and technologies to enhance learning) and the quality of the learning environment (child-centred, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe). Furthermore, basic education can play a role in reducing risks of infection by HIV/AIDS and other health hazards;
- intergenerational learning: the learning that parents and grandparents do enhances the learning that children do. In turn, the success or failure of learning at school impacts on how adults learn later on in their lives;
- develop and support awareness of the cultures present in each country, understanding differences, intercultural exchanges and creativity as well as defending democratic and universal values by all forms and practices of formal and non-formal education.
- support lifelong education for citizenship efforts of non-governmental organizations and citizens, associations that participate in the democratic dynamic and cultural development.

### 3.6. Monitoring

- Set up a monitoring plan that allows levels achieved to be measured against levels required and in particular to determine, in social and geographical terms, the populations that have the most difficulties in attaining the objectives set. Research-based policies should explore how individuals and their communities can learn, and why they do not.
- Establish quality-improvement systems to enable the responsible education personnel to allocate resources according to locally perceived needs and priorities. Enlisting parents, teachers and community representatives in this process can promote ownership and help to enhance a sense of local responsibility.

### 3.7. Personnel

Basic education and basic training personnel include all the actors related to the educational, social, cultural and health sectors.

The main objective is to instil in the institutions and the personnel that are responsible for education, the will that is needed in order to attain the goal of the educational success of each pupil and to develop the practices that are required for this purpose. It implies, in particular, training and retraining teachers, assessing schools and teachers, co-ordinating their action, and training teachers and social interveners in how to dialogue with excluded families and with the parents of pupils in difficulty.

The Warsaw regional EFA conference refers to the already internationally adopted documents such as the ILO Convention on the Status of Teachers and the 1996 recommendations of the 45th International Conference on Education. Measures to increase the social status of teachers of all school levels should be taken; this has to do not only with salaries but also with academic qualification and access to post-graduate studies. At the same time it should be emphasized that the nature of the teaching profession is related to decision-making and planning, and to identifying and solving problems, rather than to transmitting knowledge and following rules. The recognition of this fact has consequences for the goals and style of in-service teacher-education programmes. Teachers must have the possibility with their organizations to participate in the process of formulating educational policies.

Moreover, the essential role of universities and other institutions of higher education should also be emphasized both in educational research and in pre-service teacher education.

## In the region

1. Sharing information, good practices and interesting experiences in the management and improvement of basic education systems across the region should be facilitated in order to find common convergent solutions. This regional co-operation should rely on existing intergovernmental (Council of EUROPE, UNESCO, OECD, EU, CIS, NAFTA, OSCE, etc.) and non-governmental structures. These exchanges can be encouraged to take place in a variety of ways, including e-mail, written communication, ad hoc meetings and committees.
2. Given the need for further improvement of education systems, particularly in hard-hit economies of Central and Eastern Europe, enhanced flows of financial assistance are needed and should be provided. In this context, bilateral, regional and multilateral agencies are invited to re-assess their priorities and to consider significant increases of assistance to education.

## With the whole world

Education must be allowed to play its key role for lasting development in the context of globalization and by respecting the responsibilities of each country. This can be achieved by implementing the following measures:

1. Empower developing countries to identify their needs, and to lead and own their development by working in close partnership towards achieving the goals defined at the Dakar Forum.
2. Encourage international organizations, notably the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, to improve and collect internationally comparable data and develop quality research and thus enable the worldwide community to assess achievement of the goals established in Dakar. This process should be done in concertation and co-operation with national and regional research and statistical institutions. International agencies will be asked to assist in national capacity-building for statistical collection and analysis.
3. Rectify the level of assistance that is provided by the countries in our region and reserve an adequate portion for basic education in order to meet the expectations of all actors in the field of Education for All.
4. Since there is no common model for Overseas Development Aid, an early rethinking of its levels, ways and means by the North American and European countries should be considered in light of the Dakar Forum.
5. The revised draft Dakar Declaration should be made available to all ministries, institutions and authorities concerned by 30 March at the latest to allow for proper consultation and consensus building. ■



## Recife Declaration of the E-9 Countries

Adopted by the E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting  
Recife, Brazil, 31 January-2 February 2000



## Preamble

1. We, the Ministers of Education and representatives of the E-9 countries comprising Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan, and accounting for more than 50 per cent of the world's population, having assembled in Recife, Brazil from 31 January to 2 February 2000, have reviewed the progress of EFA in our countries. Having taken note of the national reports of the nine countries, we recognize with deep satisfaction that, since the Jomtien Conference, March 1990, and the EFA Summit of Heads of State of the E-9 countries, New Delhi, December 1993, there have been significant breakthroughs in all of the nine countries.
2. Despite the diversities among E-9 countries, there is a consensus regarding the achievements recorded during the past ten years in the field of education as well as the need to draft a new visionary agenda for the new millennium that will reaffirm basic education as a human right.
3. We believe that the objectives of Education for All should be pursued through evaluations of the programmes specific to each country and by targeted actions to address the multiplicity of problems. We also believe that the realities of the twenty-first century demand that we all adopt the newest methods and most modern technologies in our pursuit of truly global modernization in the field of education in order to achieve excellence for all. These challenges affect not only the E-9 countries but are also shared by all countries throughout the world.
4. The key challenge is the promotion of social and economic development with equity through quality education for all. Besides formal organizations for basic education, we should seek to engage civil society in a broader context with all its creativity and commitment. We underline that education is for excellence and excellence is for all.
5. The fact is that some of the E-9 countries are in a state of transition, confronted simultaneously by the challenges of advancing to higher levels of development while also addressing the problems of underdevelopment. These countries work to meet advanced standards of excellence while still dealing with pockets of backwardness in education.
6. We attest to the crucial role of national governments in partnership with provincial governments, local bodies, NGOs and civil society in meeting EFA goals with renewed enthusiasm.
7. New paradigms of international solidarity are urgently needed. These new models require increased technical co-operation among countries and regions as well as broad technical and financial support from international agencies

and development partners. Such co-operation in turn requires the careful designing of specific projects that will allow us to draw on the experience garnered throughout the world in solving educational problems over the past decade.

## We acknowledge the achievements of the decade which include:

- Massive reduction in adult illiteracy;
- Increase in early childhood education strategies that involve parents and that support vulnerable families;
- Substantial increase in pre-school educational services;
- Significant advance towards universal elementary education;
- Improved gender equity in school access for boys and girls and for school attendance;
- Addressing early development of attitudes and values for coexistence and civic education;
- Decentralization of educational services;
- Development of a national curriculum framework;
- Advance in the process of inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools;
- Use of distance education for the expansion of learning and for teacher training;
- Development of programmes for specific target groups with appropriate inbuilt incentives;
- Strengthening of national database, evaluation and accreditation systems for education;
- Expansion of partnerships with NGOs, civil society and private sector;
- Increasing public awareness for EFA through media and advocacy.

## We recognize the following challenges:

- Persistence of large numbers of illiterates in some countries;
- Provision of access to basic education in remote and inaccessible areas;
- Expansion of provision of early childhood education and development;
- Further massive reduction of illiteracy and promotion of technological learning and life skills;
- Improved quality and learning achievement in education;
- Addressing adequately existing inequities in education, particularly in regard to girls' and women's education;
- Mastery learning and excellence for all.

## We declare the following as our goals:

- According highest national priority to EFA and in particular to the eradication of adult illiteracy;
- Increasing the number of students that complete basic, middle and higher education;
- Total inclusion of children with special needs in the mainstream schools;
- Effecting changes in legislation to extend basic education and include education for all in policy statements;
- Implementation of new educational modalities that link education to the work force;
- Ensuring access and equity for population located in inaccessible areas;
- Developing national networks of communication systems for universal school access to internet and all forms of electronic media;

- Strengthening moral values in the basic education curriculum, stressing the importance of democratic values such as justice, fairness, tolerance, and respect for diversity and equity for teachers and students;
- Enhancement of quality education measured not only by national standards attained in traditional subjects but also by the acquisition of knowledge, life skills and technological abilities;
- Improvement of the quality of initial and in-service teacher education;
- Development of special programmes that respond directly to the problems of groups that have been traditionally excluded from development;
- Increasing the participation of civil society including the local community to promote basic learning and lifelong learning for all;
- Increasing modern technology and distance learning in all aspects of EFA;
- Establishing an effective programme for post-literacy and continuing education;
- Paying greater attention to education of adolescents (HIV/AIDS) to equip them with life skills;
- Strengthening databases for education;
- Continuing necessary reforms in management of education to improve administration and supervision;
- Sharpening focus on gender equity;
- Ensuring excellence for all in education.

## Resource mobilization

We wish to strengthen our resolve to further increase resource allocations for EFA, at the level of national government down to the provincial, state and local bodies, and by mustering the support of civil society, NGOs as well as industry and business towards contribution and involvement in EFA.

The success of the EFA programme critically depends on mobilization of adequate resources for education. While all the countries acknowledge this requirement, some of the countries of the group face enormous constraints in mobilizing adequate resources.

## The role of the international community

Acknowledging the valuable support and assistance offered at the national level by UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank and bilateral donors in pursuing the goals of EFA, we would like to invite these agencies to renew and review their role and strategies in conformity with national plans and priorities and to evolve a more co-ordinated framework for providing international assistance to quality education for all.

We unequivocally call on the international community to prioritize assistance to:

1. Support National Plans for Basic Education of each Member State;
2. Facilitate reduction and writing off of debt burden in a manner that provides additional funding for education as well as commits further resources to education;
3. Promote advocacy and awareness of the benefits of literacy in alleviating poverty, promoting health and mitigating social tensions in order to assure sustainable development;
4. Provide technical assistance to improve educational statistics and information systems and strengthening the evaluation for quality education for all.

## Vision for the future

We acknowledge that quality education for all will be our biggest challenge and also our greatest hope. Universal access to education will allow our peoples to participate more effectively in an interactive world.

The onset of the information and knowledge revolution is changing our lives in an unprecedented manner. Knowledge has become the capital and the currency of the twenty-first century. New technologies, new mechanisms and immensely large and varied sources of information are influencing our private and public lives. While remaining committed to utilizing the advanced and modern technologies, we shall remain equally

committed to maintaining the cultural identities of our respective societies and countries.

We realize that we can help the world advance the cause of humanity by striking a balance between acquisition of information and knowledge and enrichment of the essence of our rich heritage. We realize the need for a synergy between technological modernity and traditional values. We look ahead to a future in which our countries are liberated from the burden of illiteracy and are fully empowered to move in fruitful harmony towards peace, prosperity and global stability, security and technological development.

## The Way Forward

We, the Ministers and representatives of E-9 countries, reaffirm our joint commitment and pledge to sustain, intensify and accelerate our efforts and policies for achieving the laudable goals of EFA. While appreciating the sincerity and enormity of efforts made by governments and civil society in our countries, we acknowledge the seriousness of the problems that continue to impede our progress towards EFA. We appreciate that new challenges have surfaced over the past decade that need to be addressed in an innovative and creative manner. We see renewed hope in the emerging technologies that provide undreamed-of opportunities for lifelong learning and that have the potential to enable our countries to leap-frog into the new millennium with hope.

We call on the international community to express their solidarity and to continue to lend their support to our endeavours in this regard. We believe that a continuous sharing of knowledge and experiences could make a visible contribution towards a more efficient implementation of national EFA policies and programmes. We wish to strengthen alliances and effective partnerships between countries and the international community to give a fresh impetus to EFA. We approach the new millennium with the hope and optimism generated by our achievements and resolve to address the challenges of EFA with even greater determination and commitment to achieve excellence for all. ■



# World Declaration on Education for All

## Meeting Basic Learning Needs

Adopted by the World Conference  
on Education for All.

Meeting Basic Learning Needs,  
Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990

## PREAMBLE

More than 40 years ago, the nations of the world, speaking through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asserted that 'everyone has a right to education'. Despite notable efforts by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, the following realities persist:

- More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling;
- More than 960 million adults, two-thirds of whom are women, are illiterate, and functional illiteracy is a significant problem in all countries, industrialized and developing;
- More than one-third of the world's adults have no access to the printed knowledge, new skills and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives and help them shape, and adapt to, social and cultural change; and
- More than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills;

At the same time, the world faces daunting problems: notably mounting debt burdens, the threat of economic stagnation and decline, rapid population growth, widening economic disparities among and within nations, war, occupation, civil strife, violent crime, the preventable deaths of millions of children and widespread environmental degradation. These problems constrain efforts to meet basic learning needs, while the lack of basic education among a significant proportion of the population prevents societies from addressing such problems with strength and purpose.

These problems have led to major setbacks in basic education in the 1980s in many of the least-developed countries. In some other countries, economic growth has been available to finance education expansion, but even so, many millions remain in poverty and unschooled or illiterate. In certain industrialized countries, too, cutbacks in government expenditure over the 1980s have led to the deterioration of education.

Yet the world is also at the threshold of a new century, with all its promise and possibilities. Today, there is genuine progress toward peaceful detente and greater co-operation among nations. Today, the essential rights and capacities of women are being realized. Today, there are many useful scientific and cultural developments. Today, the sheer quantity of information available in the world – much of it relevant to survival and basic well-being – is exponentially greater than that available only a few years ago, and the rate of its growth is accelerating. This includes information about obtaining more life-enhancing

knowledge – or learning how to learn. A synergistic effect occurs when important information is coupled with another modern advance – our new capacity to communicate.

These new forces, when combined with the cumulative experience of reform, innovation, research and the remarkable educational progress of many countries, make the goal of basic education for all – for the first time in history – an attainable goal.

Therefore, we participants in the World Conference on Education for All, assembled in Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March, 1990:

**Recalling** that education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world;

**Understanding** that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance, and international co-operation;

**Knowing** that education is an indispensable key to, though not a sufficient condition for, personal and social improvement;

**Recognizing** that traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage have a value and validity in their own right and a capacity to both define and promote development;

**Acknowledging** that, overall, the current provision of education is seriously deficient and that it must be made more relevant and qualitatively improved, and made universally available;

**Recognizing** that sound basic education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education and of scientific and technological literacy and capacity and thus to self-reliant development; and

**Recognizing** the necessity to give to present and coming generations an expanded vision of, and a renewed commitment to, basic education to address the scale and complexity of the challenge;

proclaim the following

**World Declaration on Education for All:  
Meeting Basic Learning Needs**

## EDUCATION FOR ALL: THE PURPOSE

### ARTICLE 1. MEETING BASIC LEARNING NEEDS

**1** Every person — child, youth and adult — shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time.

**2** The satisfaction of these needs empowers individuals in any society and confers upon them a responsibility to respect and build upon their collective cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage, to promote the education of others, to further the cause of social justice, to achieve environmental protection, to be tolerant towards social, political and religious systems which differ from their own, ensuring that commonly accepted humanistic values and human rights are upheld, and to work for international peace and solidarity in an interdependent world.

**3** Another and no less fundamental aim of educational development is the transmission and enrichment of common cultural and moral values. It is in these values that the individual and society find their identity and worth.

**4** Basic education is more than an end in itself. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may build, systematically, further levels and types of education and training.

## EDUCATION FOR ALL: AN EXPANDED VISION AND A RENEWED COMMITMENT

### ARTICLE 2. SHAPING THE VISION

**1** To serve the basic learning needs of all requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an 'expanded vision' that surpasses present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices. New possibilities exist today which result

from the convergence of the increase in information and the unprecedented capacity to communicate. We must seize them with creativity and a determination for increased effectiveness.

**2** As elaborated in Articles 3–7, the expanded vision encompasses:

- Universalizing access and promoting equity;
- Focusing on learning;
- Broadening the means and scope of basic education;
- Enhancing the environment for learning;
- Strengthening partnerships.

**3** The realization of an enormous potential for human progress and empowerment is contingent upon whether people can be enabled to acquire the education and the start needed to tap into the ever-expanding pool of relevant knowledge and the new means for sharing this knowledge.

### ARTICLE 3. UNIVERSALIZING ACCESS AND PROMOTING EQUITY

**1** Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults. To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded, and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparities.

**2** For basic education to be equitable, all children, youth and adults must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.

**3** The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.

**4** An active commitment must be made to removing educational disparities. Underserved groups — the poor; street and working children; rural and remote populations; nomads and migrant workers; indigenous peoples; ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities; refugees; those displaced by war; and people under occupation — should not suffer any discrimination in access to learning opportunities.

**5** The learning needs of the disabled demand special attention. Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system.

### ARTICLE 4. FOCUSING ON LEARNING

Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development — for an individual or for society — depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities, i.e. whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values. The focus of basic education must, therefore, be on actual learning acquisition

and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment, continued participation in organized programmes and completion of certification requirements. Active and participatory approaches are particularly valuable in assuring learning acquisition and allowing learners to reach their fullest potential. It is, therefore, necessary to define acceptable levels of learning acquisition for educational programmes and to improve and apply systems of assessing learning achievement.

## ARTICLE 5. BROADENING THE MEANS AND SCOPE OF BASIC EDUCATION

The diversity, complexity, and changing nature of basic learning needs of children, youth and adults necessitates broadening and constantly redefining the scope of basic education to include the following components:

- **Learning begins at birth.** This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities, or institutional programmes, as appropriate.
- **The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling.** Primary education must be universal, ensure that the basic learning needs of all children are satisfied, and take into account the culture, needs, and opportunities of the community. Supplementary alternative programmes can help meet the basic learning needs of children with limited or no access to formal schooling, provided that they share the same standards of learning applied to schools and are adequately supported.
- **The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems.** Literacy programmes are indispensable because literacy is a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of other life skills. Literacy in the mother-tongue strengthens cultural identity and heritage. Other needs can be served by: skills training, apprenticeships, and formal and non-formal education programmes in health, nutrition, population, agricultural techniques, the environment, science, technology, family life including fertility awareness, and other societal issues.
- **All available instruments and channels of information, communications, and social action could be used to help convey essential knowledge and inform and educate people on social issues.** In addition to the traditional means, libraries, television, radio and other media can be mobilized to realize their potential towards meeting basic education needs of all.

These components should constitute an integrated system – complementary, mutually reinforcing, and of comparable standards, and they should contribute to creating and developing possibilities for lifelong learning.

## ARTICLE 6. ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

**Learning does not take place in isolation. Societies, therefore, must ensure that all learners receive the nutrition, health care, and general physical and emotional support they need in order to participate actively in and benefit from their education.** Knowledge and skills that will enhance the learning environment of children should be integrated into community learning programmes for adults. The education of children and their parents or other caretakers is mutually supportive and this interaction should be used to create, for all, a learning environment of vibrancy and warmth.

## ARTICLE 7. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

**National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organizational requirement for this task. New and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary:** partnerships among all sub-sectors and forms of education, recognizing the special role of teachers and that of administrators and other educational personnel; partnerships between education and other government departments, including planning, finance, labour, communications, and other social sectors; partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups, and families. The recognition of the vital role of both families and teachers is particularly important. In this context, the terms and conditions of service of teachers and their status, which constitute a determining factor in the implementation of education for all, must be urgently improved in all countries in line with the joint ILO/UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers (1966). Genuine partnerships contribute to the planning, implementing, managing and evaluating of basic education programmes. When we speak of 'an expanded vision and a renewed commitment', partnerships are at the heart of it.

## EDUCATION FOR ALL: THE REQUIREMENTS

### ARTICLE 8. DEVELOPING A SUPPORTIVE POLICY CONTEXT

**1 Supportive policies in the social, cultural, and economic sectors are required in order to realize the full provision and utilization of basic education for individual and societal improvement.** The provision of basic education for all depends on political commitment and political will backed by appropriate fiscal measures and reinforced by educational policy reforms and institutional strengthening. Suitable economic, trade, labour, employment and health policies will enhance learners' incentives and contributions to societal development.

2 Societies should also insure a strong intellectual and scientific environment for basic education. This implies improving higher education and developing scientific research. Close contact with contemporary technological and scientific knowledge should be possible at every level of education.

## ARTICLE 9. MOBILIZING RESOURCES

1 **If the basic learning needs of all are to be met through a much broader scope of action than in the past, it will be essential to mobilize existing and new financial and human resources, public, private and voluntary.** All of society has a contribution to make, recognizing that time, energy and funding directed to basic education are perhaps the most profound investment in people and in the future of a country which can be made.

2 Enlarged public-sector support means drawing on the resources of all the government agencies responsible for human development, through increased absolute and proportional allocations to basic education services with the clear recognition of competing claims on national resources of which education is an important one, but not the only one. Serious attention to improving the efficiency of existing educational resources and programmes will not only produce more, it can also be expected to attract new resources. The urgent task of meeting basic learning needs may require a re-allocation between sectors, as, for example, a transfer from military to educational expenditure. Above all, special protection for basic education will be required in countries undergoing structural adjustment and facing severe external debt burdens. Today, more than ever, education must be seen as a fundamental dimension of any social, cultural, and economic design.

## ARTICLE 10. STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

1 **Meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility. It requires international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities.** All nations have valuable knowledge and experiences to share for designing effective educational policies and programmes.

2 Substantial and long-term increases in resources for basic education will be needed. The world community, including inter-governmental agencies and institutions, has an urgent responsibility to alleviate the constraints that prevent some countries from achieving the goal of education for all. It will mean the adoption of measures that augment the national budgets of the poorest countries or serve to relieve heavy debt burdens. Creditors and debtors must seek innovative and equitable formulae to resolve these burdens, since the capacity of many developing countries to respond effectively to education and other basic needs will be greatly helped by finding solutions to the debt problem.

3 Basic learning needs of adults and children must be addressed wherever they exist. Least developed and low-income countries have special needs which require priority in international support for basic education in the 1990s.

4 All nations must also work together to resolve conflicts and strife, to end military occupations, and to settle displaced populations, or to facilitate their return to their countries of origin, and ensure that their basic learning needs are met. Only a stable and peaceful environment can create the conditions in which every human being, child and adult alike, may benefit from the goals of this Declaration.

**We, the participants in the World Conference on Education for All, reaffirm the right of all people to education. This is the foundation of our determination, singly and together, to ensure education for all.**

We commit ourselves to act co-operatively through our own spheres of responsibility, taking all necessary steps to achieve the goals of education for all. Together we call on governments, concerned organizations and individuals to join in this urgent undertaking.

The basic learning needs of all can and must be met. There can be no more meaningful way to begin the International Literacy Year, to move forward the goals of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-92), the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-97), the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000), of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. There has never been a more propitious time to commit ourselves to providing basic learning opportunities for all the people of the world.

We adopt, therefore, this *World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs* and agree on the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs*, to achieve the goals set forth in this *Declaration*.



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