

Communiqué from the fourth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All

(Brasilia, Brazil, 8-10 November 2004)

The Brasilia Statement

1. We, Heads of States, Ministers, Heads of international organizations, Heads of non-governmental organizations and high-level officials of international agencies met, at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO, for the fourth meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA), 8-10 November 2004, in Brasilia, Brazil. We are indebted to the Government of Brazil for its hospitality and generosity in organising our meeting.
2. We alert the world community, in particular the leaders of governments in developed and developing countries and of the multilateral and bilateral organisations, to the fact that we have not met our goal of ensuring that there is an equal number of girls to boys in primary and secondary education by 2005. Furthermore, unless new and bold steps are taken to address the range of challenges that impede access to education for those who are out-of-school and unless we ensure gender-sensitive education of a good quality and equal opportunities for all, we are also at risk of failing to reach the goal of gender equality and universal primary education in 2015 as well as the remaining EFA goals. We must ensure that this situation is fully and urgently addressed in 2005, in particular at the UN Assembly on the Millennium Declaration and at the meetings of the G8 countries, the African Union and the World Economic Forum.

The Quality Imperative

3. We benefited highly from the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005: The Quality Imperative*, the Teachers' Parliament, the Technical Consultation on the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), the Roundtable on Public-Private Partnerships on EFA and the Roundtable on Achieving Education for All and the Elimination of Child Labour. The Report shows that access and quality are interdependent and inseparable needs and rights and must be simultaneously addressed and improved in national education plans and policies and international education initiatives. Strong political commitment and well-targeted investment programmes have improved the quality of and increased access to education for millions of children in many countries in a wide range of circumstances. We recognize the impressive achievements of many countries, including some of the poorest, that sharply improved their EFA achievement since the Dakar meeting. We appreciate that there are one

hundred million more children in school since 1990. We also acknowledge the recent upturn in bilateral aid to education since Dakar and the prospects for significantly increased funding through other financing initiatives.

4. A quality education must facilitate learning in terms of creativity, values for democratic citizenship and life skills, as well as knowledge and cognitive skills within a safe and learner-friendly environment. This remains a significant challenge even in highly resourced countries where levels of learning achievement are becoming a serious problem. Reorienting education to improve quality outcomes requires education systems that are structured and equipped to educate learners to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Areas for urgent attention

5. The pace of change, however, is insufficient to achieve the set goals. Urgent steps must be taken to address the particular needs of the excluded and marginalized, the poor, the increasing population of orphans and other vulnerable groups, children with disability, and girls and women; the latter constitute the majority of the out-of-school and illiterate populations. Greater attention must also be paid to mitigating the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on children's opportunity to access and complete a quality primary education and to developing appropriate education strategies for eliminating child labour progressively. Achieving real progress for these groups will require a comprehensive approach involving both demand-and supply-side interventions. Countries that are furthest from achieving the EFA goals are also furthest from achieving quality, whether this is in terms of survival and retention in school or learning outcomes. Special efforts must be made to address the needs in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States where the problems remain the largest.
6. Situations of conflict and post-conflict present special challenges and opportunities for reconstruction and require appropriate responses and resources to safeguard the right to education for all children, especially girls who are most vulnerable in these circumstances.
7. Successful qualitative education reforms must be based on a long-term vision for education, a motivated and well-supported teaching corps and strong government leadership in coordinated partnership and synergy with all development partners. While recognizing the need for continued efforts in early childhood education, literacy and HIV/AIDS, we draw particular attention to the immediate steps that must be taken

in three of the core areas to achieve Education for All, namely, girls' education, teachers and resources:

8. Gender and girls' education:

Acknowledging the urgent need to reinvigorate and increase efforts in support of the gender parity and gender equality goals, Governments must:

- Work together with development partners to abolish school fees and reduce other costs of education to poor and working children, particularly girls. This must be done as part of a well-planned and adequately supported programme to maintain quality.
- Plan education of girls in an integrated manner, ensuring an inter-sectoral approach that addresses early childhood education and development for children of poor families, literacy and empowerment of women.
- Mainstream gender and HIV/AIDS in national education sector plans, Poverty Reduction Strategies and Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) assessment criteria to encourage adequate and sustainable financing levels through the use of gender-sensitive budgeting.
- Devise policies to avoid the under-achievement of boys where it exists.
- Develop gender-sensitive curricula, teaching methods and learning environments.
- Produce a professional gender-sensitive teaching force and ensure that the number and quality of female teachers are adequate at all levels of the education system.
- Reinforce appropriate measures to address the growing phenomenon of gender-based violence in and around schools.
- Ensure active participation and capacity-building of civil society as well as families and communities in the planning and implementation of girls' education and women's literacy and empowerment in national processes.

9. Teachers:

Recognizing the critical and evolving role that teachers play in ensuring that the citizens of the world are prepared now and for the future, Governments must:

- Create effective structures for dialogue involving educators, especially teachers and their representative organisations, for building consensus on how to improve the quality of education.

- Improve the status, working conditions, career perspectives and professional development opportunities for teachers and develop appropriate salary structures in order to attract and retain a teaching force of good quality and help avoid the problem of teacher migration abroad.
- Work with each other to mitigate the negative effects of teacher migration.
- Strengthen teacher effectiveness, including teacher accountability.
- Mitigate the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the teaching force through appropriate policies, financing and other measures, including prevention education.
- Consider the adoption of country-specific codes of ethics for the teaching profession in dialogue with all stakeholders.
- Ensure that the competencies of teachers meet national standards and establish supportive pre- and in-service teacher training to that effect.
- Guarantee that all teachers are professionally trained, whether teaching children in traditional or non-traditional settings.
- Improve the teacher-pupil ratios in order to enhance quality.

10. Financial resources:

In order to build a clear, strong and sustainable compact between developed and developing nations to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals, Governments must:

- Increase and diversify domestic resources and enhance the effective and efficient use of both domestic and external resources.
- Make balanced sector budget allocations in support of EFA.

Donor countries and funding agencies must:

- Strive to significantly increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other resources as agreed upon at Monterrey.
- Strive to adopt country-specific modalities, including debt swaps for education, to deepen debt relief and debt service relief, to unlock resources for basic education in the countries that have shown accountability and transparency in education policy and domestic resource mobilization.
- Endeavour to make specific and long-term commitments to provide the estimated US\$ 5.6 billion per year, over and above current funding, needed by countries to meet the goal of universal primary completion in ways that provide more predictable, flexible and sustainable assistance.

- Continue to strengthen the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) as an effective mechanism to ensure donor coordination and target substantially increased resources to those low-income countries with sound economic, governance and human capacity policies. Steps must be taken to support a higher number of eligible countries with strong and credible plans and to ensure to the extent possible the predictability and continuity of external resource flows to provide incentives to recipient countries.
- Endeavour to reduce the burden on government capacity by coordinating and harmonizing bilateral and multilateral donor practices around strengthened government systems.
- Support quality improvements regarding, for example, school effectiveness, curriculum reform, textbook and learning materials, and an inclusive and responsive learning environment.
- Provide appropriate support to countries in difficult and emergency situations.

Donor countries, international funding agencies and governments must:

- Extend collaboration with the private sector in the mobilization of resources for the full EFA agenda.
- Explore new avenues to fund EFA, including advocating the incorporation of EFA as a priority on the agendas of new international initiatives such as the Millennium Challenge Account and the International Finance Facility.

The way forward

EFA Partners

11. The United Nations (UN) organisations should ensure high visibility of the EFA agenda in the discussions and conclusions of the forthcoming Millennium Declaration Review Summit in September 2005. UNESCO should hold a particular responsibility in this regard.
12. The UN agencies should ensure that the EFA agenda has a central place in the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.
13. As host of the 2005 G8 meeting, the United Kingdom should work with UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the G8, and build on the work of the Commission for Africa to ensure that full attention is given to the urgent need to increase efforts to achieve the education goals, with particular focus on the gender parity goal by 2005.

14. Governments and international organisations must work more closely with civil society, including non-governmental organisations, to improve transparency and accountability in policy processes, budgeting and education management, and enable genuine participation of civil society and key stakeholders to generate the political will and consensus needed to make quality and gender equality in education a priority.
15. All partners should mobilize effectively around and build upon the EFA Week, and increase their participation in other initiatives that will strengthen advocacy opportunities for EFA globally.
16. We encourage UNICEF and other partners of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) to accelerate the process of extending UNGEI at regional and country levels. UNGEI partners must give priority attention to girls' education by more active involvement with FTI and other sector-wide processes, by scaling up girls' education through systemic interventions while continuing work on targeted approaches, and by strengthening partnership mechanisms at all levels.

UNESCO

17. UNESCO should continue to play the key role in EFA coordination by strengthening its leadership and coordination of partners in order to ensure appropriate follow-up to Dakar. UNESCO should build on the success of the joint meetings of the High-Level Group, the UNGEI Partnership and the FTI Partners' Group in Brasilia by working to further integrate the efforts of all three groups in order to strengthen the international education architecture.
18. In line with the Strategic Review of UNESCO's post-Dakar follow-up role in EFA, we urge UNESCO to initiate early consultations with key stakeholders to achieve greater clarity, cohesion and mutual recognition regarding their respective roles as partners in reaching the EFA goals and education-related Millennium Development Goals. UNESCO should facilitate the preparation of a comprehensive mapping and implementation plan of the current and future contributions of each partner towards reaching these goals.
19. UNESCO, in collaboration with its EFA partners, should initiate planning to undertake a comprehensive mid-term review of progress towards the EFA goals in 2007-08.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

20. The UIS should continue to support countries and regions in the improvement of data, their quality, collection and timeliness. UIS should continue to address indicator development, particularly in relation to quality. In collaboration with UN and other partners, UIS should develop a strategy for improving the quality and timeliness of data

collection of internationally comparable EFA statistics. It should expand coverage to include reliable data on domestic expenditure.

21. Governments should continue to strengthen their data collection systems and statistics-related capacities both to inform the development of national EFA policies and to enable the timely reporting of data to the UIS for the annual monitoring of EFA.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR)

22. We support the intention of the GMR to undertake a mid-term review of progress towards EFA in its 2008 Report. This should complement UNESCO's planned comprehensive mid-term review.
23. We support the plan to put in place an evaluation strategy for the GMR starting in 2005 in order to assess its use and influence and identify ways of strengthening the Report's value as a global and national policy tool.
24. The EDI should be further refined and developed as a tool for monitoring EFA. To increase the effectiveness of the Report to accurately assess progress and priorities, it should increasingly address the realities at sub-national levels, especially in federated systems where disaggregated data is imperative for actual decision-making.
25. The GMR should work with the World Bank and the OECD-DAC, to appropriately account for budget support financing in determining donors' contributions to education sector financing.

Next meeting

26. We welcome the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China to host the next meeting of the High-Level Group on 28-30 November 2005 on the theme of Literacy with a special focus on education for rural people.