

# Appendices

## 1. Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,

Madam President of the Executive Board,  
Distinguished Members of the High-Level Group,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to bid you a warm welcome to this, the first meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA). The meeting has been timed to coincide with the 31st session of UNESCO's General Conference, which represents a golden opportunity to take the EFA message to a major international gathering of decision-makers from around the world.

We have grounds for hope that, during the course of the years leading up to 2015, we can make real headway towards achieving basic education for all of good quality. But we have worries and concerns about whether some countries can overcome the constraints that impede their educational development. Our anxieties preceded the tragic events of 11 September in the United States, whose consequences are casting a deep shadow over the entire global agenda of enhancing peace, development and security. It is imperative that we do not allow EFA to become another casualty of these events.

I believe that EFA has become even more vital as a result of the changing international situation. One of the central themes of the Delors Report, that of 'learning to live together', has suddenly acquired renewed pertinence and urgency. More than ever, the contents, methods and outcomes of learning need to be re-visited to make education a more effective and powerful instrument for 'building the defences of peace in the minds of men'. It is particularly important that young minds are turned away from violence and are turned towards the virtues of tolerance, mutual understanding and peace, not only in action but also in thought and speech.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, in my capacity as the Director-General of UNESCO, I was mandated by the World Education Forum at Dakar to convene a high-level, small and flexible

group to serve as a lever for political commitment and for financial and technical resource mobilization. Bringing together highest-level leaders from governments and civil society of developing and developed countries, and from development agencies, this group is intended to serve as a strategic means for holding the international community to account for the commitments made in Dakar.

In preparing this meeting, I have tried to ensure that the High-Level Group is broadly representative of the global EFA constituency and manageable in size. The Dakar Framework for Action placed strong emphasis on 'ownership' of EFA by developing countries and on action at the national level. In light of this, my purpose has been to guarantee that approximately half of the main participants are drawn from developing countries. The other categories of representation are bilateral development partners, multilateral institutions and agencies, and civil society. To broaden the scope of representation whilst preserving manageability, I have invited a number of observers, whose presence adds a further rich dimension to our meeting.

During the past eighteen months, there have been several international and regional meetings at Minister level aimed at making further progress towards achieving the six Dakar goals by 2015. These meetings included the E-9 conference in Beijing in August and the International Conference on Education held in Geneva last month. At the working or technical level, we have now held two meetings of the Working Group on EFA, and there are innumerable daily contacts and regular exchanges among EFA partners.

With this inaugural meeting of the High-Level Group, the capstone of the EFA movement is put into place. From its vantage point, the High-Level Group can oversee the entire domain of EFA activity and provide the political impetus to take us forward. While not strictly evaluative in character, this meeting is a vital opportunity to take stock of progress and problems since Dakar and to appraise the direction in which we are going. Thus, it affords an opportunity to review what has been done and, perhaps more importantly, what ought to be done, especially in terms of the six Dakar goals and related targets.

## Director-General of UNESCO

Clearly, the purpose and functions of the High-Level Group are crucial for the whole EFA movement. We, as representatives of the EFA movement, need to chart the way ahead. We need to share insights and ideas regarding how best we can meet the EFA challenges facing us. And we need the support of everyone here, not only now but also in the period ahead, to ensure that EFA climbs even higher on the global agenda. It is my hope that the Group will act as a sounding board for the EFA endeavour, and that it will empower all of us to become vocal and energetic ambassadors advocating not only the goals and ideals of EFA but also the concrete modalities for achieving them. According to the Dakar Framework for Action, the High-Level Group is a political lever. As you know, the function of a lever is to move things. The EFA movement needs your leverage!

Before turning to the three major strands of our programme – political commitment, resource mobilization, and civil society participation and partnerships – I would like to highlight certain crucial areas of challenge which vitally affect the realistic chances of achieving the main Dakar goals. If we are to target our efforts where they are most needed, the following four areas must be addressed more strongly, with greater urgency and with enhanced levels of resources:

First, we must concentrate on building effective and imaginative strategies for educating the poor, the excluded and the disadvantaged. Poverty remains the greatest obstacle to realizing the right to education. We must find ways to educate the poor despite their poverty, amidst their poverty, out of their poverty. Moreover, our focus must not be limited to rural poverty, serious though this is, but must also address the desperate conditions of teeming urban slums, where children and youth are vulnerable to many combinations of risk and deprivation.

Second, we must galvanize our efforts even further in seeking to eliminate gender disparities and to achieve gender equality. The first of the Dakar targets falls due in 2005 in regard to overcoming gender disparities in primary and secondary education: it is imperative that this target receives all the attention it merits. The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, ably led by

UNICEF, deserves much greater support than it has received thus far.

Third, we must recognize that countries facing emergencies, crisis conditions or post-conflict situations are in a special category. Their circumstances are distinctive and very specific, and so are their needs. Consequently, these countries require more flexible responses from the international community, responses which transcend the relief/development divide and call for innovative inter-agency solutions.

Last but not least, the HIV/AIDS pandemic threatens to undo even the limited EFA progress achieved in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. In fact, in the countries most affected, this devastating pandemic is putting all of our EFA-related actions at risk. Consequently, it must be addressed in a comprehensive way and with the highest priority. We cannot afford to underestimate the severity of impact of HIV/AIDS on the societies affected and on their education systems. For its part, UNESCO has fashioned a strategy of response to the HIV/AIDS crisis, with a strong focus on preventive education, in conformity with the Declaration of Commitment issued by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS last June. Preventive education programmes need to have an immediate impact as well as a longer-term influence on attitudes and behaviour. Other aspects of the education crisis arising from HIV/AIDS include how to rapidly replace a teacher who dies or falls ill. After all, in many places the death of a teacher means the closure of a school. We need find practical answers to these questions urgently.

These four areas of challenge demand not only speed of action but also innovation and initiative, applied to every aspect of our response. This does not mean totally abandoning established approaches. The new information and communication technologies undoubtedly have much potential in regard to distance education for teacher training, for example, but they must be harnessed and utilized in ways that respect the virtues of traditional technologies and methods. Similarly, pedagogical innovations and curricular improvements need to be introduced with sensitivity to local traditions and cultures.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The programme of our meeting shows that there are five main sessions, each of which addresses key aspects of the overall EFA agenda. The subject of session one is 'Achieving the EFA goals at the national level'. As you know, the Dakar Framework for Action unequivocally states that the heart of EFA activity lies at the national level. It is therefore appropriate that, on the first day of this conference, we shall hear from two Ministers of Education of developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia – the two regions highlighted in Dakar as those needing special attention and priority. There are a number of other Ministers of Education with us today. We need to know how countries facing the sternest EFA challenges are providing the political leadership required for translating the Dakar commitments into reality.

This first-hand knowledge is supplemented by the first *Monitoring Report on Education For All*. Prepared through the collective endeavour of many agencies and individuals under UNESCO's overall guidance, the report provides vital information on how governments are grappling with the EFA process at the national level. Despite major constraints affecting its preparation, the report provides a useful basis for our discussions.

Several key questions regarding political commitment must figure within this session: what forms of political and policy-level leverage are required in order to find viable solutions to the problems and issues being faced? How can we strengthen political will at the national level so that EFA is given the backing and priority it needs? How can governments actively engage their national and international partners in this daunting task?

One sign of difficulty emerges from a UNESCO survey of the preparation of national EFA plans, namely, the disappointing finding that the process of consultation and participation, especially with civil society, remains rather weak. I wish to reiterate that the processes through which the plans are developed, implemented and monitored should be inclusive of all relevant and active EFA partners in each country.

Frankly, to achieve EFA in the time period agreed in Dakar, governments need all the help they can get. The basis of this help should be a wide and sustainable national consensus on EFA. The cultivation of consensus, by the way, is a source as well as a sign of political strength. It is also a persuasive indication to international and regional partners that national EFA commitments contain a promise of continuity.

The process of generating national EFA plans should serve to revitalize EFA within countries by building new capacities and by developing a better appreciation of the issues at stake. A creative partnership with civil society and the international community is integral to this vision. The involvement of civil society organizations and international agencies and benefactors from the outset offers many advantages, not least because the seriousness of governmental intent can be experienced by partners on a regular, even a daily, basis.

As some governments have already completed their plans and are anticipating donor support for their implementation, the development of systematic but sensitive review mechanisms is of some urgency. The early involvement of multilateral and bilateral agencies in EFA forums and planning processes at the national level should facilitate this important task.

These and related issues are taken up in session two on 'Building political commitment and partnerships'. The support of bilateral and multilateral development partners is essential not only in terms of financial resources but also in regard to strengthening political will, governmental capacity for coordination, and the infrastructure of EFA partnership. Innovative educational approaches must be grounded upon national 'ownership' as well as cooperation among regional and international actors. The inter-agency flagship programmes are so important because they provide a vehicle for these benefits to be realized. The integration into national EFA plans of the themes addressed by inter-agency flagship programmes requires a more proactive and vigorous approach by EFA partners at the country level. Government 'ownership' and coordination of these important flagships must be encouraged. The criteria of credibility of EFA plans may include that of incorporating and integrating the flagship programmes in a satisfactory way.

The High-Level Group is invited to propose ways in which commitment to EFA may be reinforced at national and international levels. In this regard, suggestions will be most welcome concerning new forms of partnership and areas where new initiatives and innovations are critically needed.

I would like now to address the question of resource mobilization, which is taken up strongly in session three. The time is fast approaching when the international community will be put to the acid test of fulfilling its bold, oft-quoted commitment at Dakar that 'no countries seriously committed to EFA will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources.' The international community has been requested to deliver on this commitment by launching a global initiative to 'design the strategies and mobilize the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts' (Dakar Framework for Action, para. 11).

Through an intensive consultation process with representatives of all EFA partners, UNESCO has developed an important conceptual paper entitled *The Global Initiative towards Education for All: A Framework for Mutual Understanding*. This paper represents, I believe, the shared understanding of the global initiative by the different partners in the movement. Allow me to highlight some of its major points.

Increasing the level of financing for EFA is critically important. The paper presents a discouraging analysis of the flows of international assistance in the 1990s. One of our greatest post-Dakar challenges is to reverse these trends so that, in the first decade of the century, more resources for education, in particular basic education, become available. In addition to debt relief, we need new financial resources of a concessional character. I look forward to our discussions on how increased financing for EFA may be achieved and then sustained. Also of vital interest is the question of how donor coordination at all levels may be improved. Such coordination is essential not only to avoid duplication, overlap and waste; it is a key measure and instrument of the overall coherence of our EFA efforts.

The paper points to the need to use international assistance as a catalyst for domestic resource mobilization and for improving national resource utilization and management. These considerations alert us to the fact that non-financial constraints on the achievement of EFA clearly are powerful. Since additional financial aid should be used only where it is effective, efforts to address and overcome the non-financial constraints should be welcomed by recipient governments as ways to unlock their absorptive capacity and development potential.

The paper makes a convincing case that the global initiative must be understood in broader than financial terms. Thus, simply increasing the amount of external financing, through whatever chosen mechanism, does not amount to establishing a global initiative. Furthermore, we must not forget that resources are multiple in nature (financial, human, material, non-material), that countries are in need of diversified resources, and that improved resource utilization and management are needed too. I hope we can endorse in this meeting the far more complex understanding which has been put forward in the paper and that we can also agree on the forms of political and policy-level leverage that can take the global initiative to the next stage. To facilitate this process of leverage, the initial identification of the best practical ways to launch the global initiative should be considered by this meeting.

The global initiative seeks to create synergy between international development partners and countries which receive international assistance. This synergy is based on recognized principles of international development cooperation, namely, partnership, ownership and leadership by national governments; dialogue in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring; and consistency and coherence between nationally and internationally formulated policies, goals and targets.

This synergy requires coherence, which must be reflected not only in consolidated national EFA plans of action and education sector plans but also in their consistency with wider international development policy frameworks, such as PRSPs, HIPC and CCA/UNDAF. This underlines the critical role of basic education for poverty reduction,

sustainable development and the creation of enabling environments. Thus, while the immediate purpose of the global initiative is to assist in the national efforts to achieve EFA goals and targets, its ultimate purpose is to support home-grown development processes.

I would like next to turn to the subject of civil society participation, which is the particular theme of session four. Since becoming the Director-General of UNESCO two years ago, I have made the promotion of dialogue with civil society, especially with reference to EFA, one of my foremost concerns. The Dakar Framework made it clear that EFA will only be achieved if it is rooted in a broad-based societal movement nourished by viable government/civil society partnerships.

The 113 million out-of-school children and the 875 million non-literate adults are evidence that the size and complexity of the EFA challenge are too great for governments alone to address. Even though the state's responsibilities must be reinforced, governments need to cultivate partnerships which complement their role in order to ensure quality basic education for all, especially for those who have been ill-served by or left out of mainstream education.

To do this, partnerships must be built that draw on the particular strengths of each partner. In the field of education, civil society organizations have played roles as alternative service providers, as innovators, as informed critics and as advocates. At Dakar, the international community agreed to acknowledge and support a new role of civil society in education: as policy partner. A new policy culture is needed which should be democratic, open, transparent and accountable. Civil society organizations can facilitate the involvement of local communities in EFA and provide channels for the excluded and disadvantaged to express their views and wishes. In all of this, the cultivation of trust between national governments and civil society is essential.

Since Dakar, where I intervened to ensure the wider participation of civil society, dialogue with civil society on EFA-related matters has expanded at the working level. The Special Session in Geneva last month took this dialogue to a higher level by presenting for the first time a platform for interaction between civil society

representatives and a large group of Ministers of Education. This, however, was just a first step; it is clear that further efforts will be required if this higher level of dialogue is to lead to real collaboration at the country level. Our own meeting provides another chance to deepen and extend this dialogue. I hope that we can use this opportunity to reflect on how trust and collaboration between government and civil society can best be developed and sustained for the benefit of EFA.

Meanwhile, I propose that we create similar forums for debate and dialogue on EFA between Education Ministers, senior officials, parliamentarians, academia and civil society representatives at the regional, subregional and national levels. It would be vital that the civil society representatives included teachers, parents and students.

In our efforts to strengthen the EFA movement, I believe we should be as inclusive as possible. Unfortunately, our attempt to secure high-level participation here of leading representative bodies of the corporate sector did not succeed. Perhaps we have to devise more imaginative ways of attracting them to the table. In this, we must draw upon the experience of the United Nations Global Compact and the World Bank in laying the foundations of a sustainable partnership with the private sector for EFA.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the beginning of my presentation, I invited you to apply your knowledge and experience to helping the EFA movement to chart its way forward. To stimulate this reflection, I would like to offer some concluding thoughts and suggestions.

The *Monitoring Report* maintains that, though the task of achieving the six Dakar goals by 2015 is difficult and problematic, it is feasible – politically, financially and programmatically. There is reason to be cautiously optimistic. Countries, including some very poor ones, have demonstrated that, with political leadership and strong commitment, it is possible to attain rapid acceleration of progress.

For such progress to occur on a broad scale, educational reform at the country level should proceed simultaneously with significant policy changes at the international level, especially to meet the additional resource requirements of countries where national efforts towards EFA will stall without further support, recognition and stimulation.

Stakeholders at all levels must demonstrate a willingness to enter into new partnerships, including new relationships between government and civil society. Evidence abounds that such partnerships are both possible and effective. But, as just noted, we need to find ways to cultivate trust and cooperation.

A comprehensive strategy for EFA, which is in the making, needs to establish an action-oriented and outcome-based framework within which an effective synthesis of EFA efforts may be achieved at all levels. A critical component of such a comprehensive strategy is the global initiative, which needs to be launched urgently, based on a mutual understanding of its nature and purpose. The political leverage of this Group is needed in order to take the global initiative forward, using some immediate practical steps as a basis.

A more transparent international mechanism for monitoring EFA progress would encourage a shift of focus towards increased accountability for results. Reaching the goals of EFA will require better systems for gathering, analysing and disseminating information from individual countries. In this regard, I wish to re-iterate the importance of focusing on the quality and content of education. We cannot be satisfied with quantitative measures alone.

The fifth and final session is devoted to 'Monitoring EFA progress'. For the High-Level Group to undertake its work, especially to identify ways to accelerate EFA progress, it must be well informed. In this regard, the 'EFA Observatory' housed within the UNESCO Institute for Statistics will undoubtedly play a key role. With UIS in Montreal soon becoming fully functional, we are confident that the next *Monitoring Report on Education For All*, to be presented at the next High-Level Group meeting in autumn 2002, will fulfil all expectations and needs. These needs, by the way, are not confined to the

collection and distribution of statistics but extend to careful and systematic analysis of EFA data in order to inform policy-making processes in a purposive way. UIS will be supported in this by UNESCO as a whole and by other EFA partners. I should add that the *Monitoring Report* will also serve as a vital advocacy tool for use by the High-Level Group and, indeed, by all those involved in the EFA process.

Distinguished Members of the High-Level Group,

Our discussions occur at a time of renewed threat that other issues, particularly security issues, will gain importance at the expense of social sector and educational programmes. Given our common commitment, our mandates and our shared belief that education and EFA are vital for solving the problems underlying our destabilized world, we must take the occasion of this first meeting of the High-Level Group to strengthen the political impetus behind EFA. We need to send out a strong signal that EFA must remain high on the international agenda.

I thank you in advance for your hard work and dedication during our two days together. The EFA cause demands that we make progress, and I am confident we will.

Thank you.