

The Dakar Framework for Action

Objectives Spread over 15 Years

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 cooperation 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 every child, youth and adult has 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 person'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 Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), 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 Mid-Term Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (1996), the



7. We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:

- expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;

- ensuring that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls, children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;

- ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;

- achieving a 50 per cent improvement in

- develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;

- 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 help to prevent violence and conflict;

- implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;

- urgently implement education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic;

The proceedings of the three-day World Forum on Education For All came to a close on Friday evening in Dakar, with the adoption of a 13-point Framework of Action by the 1,500 participants from all five continents who attended the event.

The participants at the meeting affirmed their determination to act collectively to promote education, especially at the primary school level, to which 113 million children in the world lack access. Around 880 million adults also on the margin of society because they can neither read nor write.

In order to meet these many challenges, the participants identified the following priorities:

- A stronger commitment to free, compulsory and quality primary education;

- A commitment that no country presenting a viable education plan shall be rejected due to insufficient resources;

- A global effort based on national education plans;

- A recognition of the need to give priority to girls' education;

- A commitment to form a genuine partnership with civil society, that is NGOs, teachers' unions, parents' associations, among others;

- A promise to immediately implement education programmes to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Banishing gender discrimination from education systems is one of the principal themes of the Framework of Action, which also stresses that the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills is not beyond the aspirations and needs of our citizens and societies.

The Action Framework decries the situation in which young people and adults do not have access to the necessary skills and knowledge to find salaried employment and participate fully in the development of their society.

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 document, 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 developing 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:

- increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education;

- ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance;

- facilitating more effective donor coordination; strengthening sector-wide approaches;

- providing earlier, deeper and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty

"The goals of Education For All cannot be postponed any longer. We must urgently respond to the fundamental education needs of all", says the document.

One of the challenges that remain to be met before the year 2015 deadline, said forum participants, is increasing adult literacy by at least 50%, especially among women, and providing equal access for all adults to basic education and continuing education programmes.

The governments, organisations, institutions, groups and associations that participated in the meeting have committed themselves to muster the required political will to facilitate the accomplishment of the goals of Education for All.

A strong political will backed by financial support has become rare in many countries. Only new financial resources, preferably in the form of loans and assistance on reasonable terms, through bilateral and multilateral funding institutions such as the World Bank and the regional development banks, but also the private sector, can bring a solution. The emergency package applies to all developing countries, but especially sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where the situation is said to be most alarming.

FORUM EDUCATION



reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education;

undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards EFA goals and targets, including periodic assessments.

There is already evidence from many countries of what can be achieved through strong national strategies supported by effective development cooperation.

Progress under these strategies could – and must – be accelerated through increased international support. At the same time, countries with less developed strategies – including countries affected by conflict, countries in transition, and post-crisis countries – must be given the support they need to achieve more rapid progress towards education for all.

12. We will strengthen accountable international and regional mechanisms to give clear expression to these commitments and 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.

13. 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.

Education for All
Forum Revised final draft

Dakar, Senegal, 26-29 April 2000



Futures Group Report

A National EFA Plan for Each Country by 2002

Every country should draw up an overall national plan for Education For All (EFA) by the year 2002. Each plan, according to the Futures Group Report, shall be defined by national officials in direct and systematic consultation with the country's civil society.

"Achieving the goals set will require an additional effort from bilateral and multilateral donors in the area of eight billion dollars per year," we need, "strong new financial commitments from governments and other donors, including the World Bank, civil society and foundations".

National plans should, "concentrate the coordinated support of all partners in development, define reforms corresponding to the six EFA goals and establish a long-term financial framework," stressed the report. It added that the plan should also be "action-oriented" fit "into a detailed calendar and also include midterm results indicators".

The Futures Group also said that national plans should, "obtain the synergy of all human development efforts by being integrated into the national development framework and planning process."

Furthermore, the report notes that, "whenever these processes are launched in the context of a credible plan, partners from the international community commit themselves to consistent, coordinated and coherent action". And that, "each partner makes a contribution in keeping with its comparative advantages regarding the support of national EFA plans to complete resources".

At regional and sub-regional levels, "a supervisory network that could become a regional forum on EFA with a specific mandate is envisaged". For its part, "UNESCO will continue its role as coordinator of the EFA partners and maintain the dynamics of cooperation, and will also serve as a secretariat".

The centre of Education For All (EFA) activities is the national level. And the organisation or establishment of transparent and democratic national forums will support the achievement of the objectives. All government departments and civil society organisations concerned will be systematically represented. Countries facing particular problems, especially complex crises or natural disasters, will receive special technical support from the international community.

FORUM EDUCATION

Explanatory Note: After a first draft of the Futures Group was orally presented to the plenary on Thursday, a late evening meeting was convened of all group members who could be traced (50% of the original group) to develop this second draft in response to the comments from the Ministers.

14. Build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress of EFA.

Implementation of the preceding goals and strategies will require national, regional and international mechanisms to be galvanised immediately. To be most effective, these mechanisms will be participatory and, wherever possible, build on what already exists. They will include representatives and stakeholders and partners and will operate in transparent and accountable ways. They will respond comprehensively to the word and spirit of the Jomtien Declaration and this Dakar Framework of Action. The functions of these mechanisms will include, to a varying degree, advocacy, resource mobilization, monitoring and EFA knowledge generation and sharing.

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 organisations will be systematically represented in these Forums. They should be transparent and democratic. 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:

- Be developed by the govern-



ment leadership in direct and systematic consultation with national civil society;

- Attract coordinated support of all development partner;

- Specify reforms addressing the six EFA goals;

- Establish a sustainable financial framework;

- Be time-bound and action-oriented;

- Include mid-term performance

Their functions will be: coordination with all relevant networks; setting and monitoring regional/sub-regional targets; advocacy; policy dialogue; the promotion of partnerships and technical cooperation; the sharing of best practice and lessons learned, monitoring and reporting for accountability; and promoting resource mobilization. Regional and international support will be available to strengthen Regional forums and relevant EFA capacities, especially within Africa and South Asia.

UNESCO will continue its mandated role in coordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. In line with this, UNESCO Director-General will convene annually a high-level small and flexible group. It will serve to leverage political commitment and technical and financial resource-mobilization. Informed by the monitoring report from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and inputs from

regional 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 leader from governments and civil society of developing and developed countries, and development agencies.

A strengthened and reformed UNESCO will serve as the Secretariat. This Secretariat will work closely with other organisations and may include staff seconded from them.

Operational plans for implementing these decisions will be made by UNESCO guided by recommendations of the final meeting of the steering committee on the day after the Dakar World Education Forum and, subsequently, by wide and representative consultation.

Achieving Education for All will require additional financial support by countries and also 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 the national governments and also by the multilateral donors including the World Bank, and the regional development banks, civil society and foundations.

NGOs Reject Framework for Action

Non-governmental organizations, some sixty of which participated in an International Consultation in Dakar before the opening of the three-day World Education Forum that ended Friday evening in Dakar, have denounced the Framework of Action adopted by the meeting.

"The Framework of Action does not meet our expectations. It is incomplete. The commitments are not tied to a schedule. It is soft in terms of financing. We hoped there would be a commitment to recognise that 6 percent of the gross national product of each state should be allocated to education – the threshold recommended by the Delors Commission – and 8 percent of development aid budgets should be allocated to basic education".

According to the NGOs, whose statement was read publicly before the larger meeting wound up, the Framework for Action is weak because it contains no mechanisms for transparency and accountability. "This we deeply deplore".

The text on the global initiative is "vague and lacks details". The NGOs reported being stunned by the contrast between the obligations that need to be fulfilled by governments of countries in the South and the relative lack of comparable commitments on the part of Northern countries and multilateral institutions.

However, the statement thanked the governments and multilateral institutions for "your willingness to stand by our side on this important task".

Education for All Meeting our Policy Objectives

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 EFA2000 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 witnessing rapid globalization. Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met urgently.

levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

- 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;

- 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:

- mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;

- promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;

- ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;