33rd Session of the General Conference
Ministerial Round Table

Education for All

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
7-8 October 2005

Fontenoy, Room X
Provisional agenda

Background

Our commitment to Education for All (EFA) is based on the belief that education needs to be promoted not only as a fundamental human right but also as a key development issue. Education is indispensable for sustainable development and poverty eradication. It is needed to promote economic growth, create employment opportunities, and foster civic participation, greater tolerance, peace and intercultural dialogue.

At the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (April 2000), the international community affirmed its commitment to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals through a number of mechanisms and strategies contained in the *Dakar Framework for Action*, which, in addition, stressed the need to integrate EFA within the wider framework of poverty reduction policies. EFA has since been accorded high priority in international and national agendas; two of the Millennium Development Goals are focused on corresponding EFA goals, and EFA was recognized as a key element for sustainable development at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. The Monterrey Development Compact (Monterrey Summit, March 2002) is being operationalized through the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI), with the aim of honouring the Dakar pledge to provide the necessary resources to countries that demonstrate commitment to EFA. The FTI is also applying the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005). It is important to explore how these and other post-Dakar developments, in particular the recent G-8 aid and debt relief package, can be further mobilized in order to advance the cause of EFA.

To fulfil its mandate, UNESCO has put in place mechanisms for the international coordination of EFA, while at the same time focusing its medium-term strategy and educational programmes on the Dakar goals in order to assist countries in their EFA efforts. On the basis of a broad consensus among its partners, UNESCO performs its coordination tasks through the High-Level Group, the Working Group on EFA, the EFA Global Monitoring Report, the EFA Flagships and the EFA Global Action Week. These mechanisms are linked with initiatives and flagships launched by the principal partners in the EFA movement such as the FTI, led by the World Bank, and the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), led by UNICEF. Also, within the framework of EFA, UNESCO has assumed the leadership and responsibility for international coordination of two new UN Decades, one on Literacy (2003-2012) and the other on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

By renewing political commitment to qualitative reforms and increased financial support extending beyond the capacity of ministries of education, many developing countries – including some of the poorest countries today – have begun to register strong progress towards the EFA goals. This is proof that achieving EFA is not an impossible task.

However, the world has also witnessed a number of developments that constrain and even reverse progress towards achieving the EFA goals by 2015. These include large-scale political and economic crises, the persistence of armed conflicts in many countries, the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and man-made and natural disasters, such as the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean.
As we move towards 2015, a review of progress has revealed that the world is not on track to achieve the EFA goals unless significant efforts are made to dramatically improve the current trends. It is already clear that the 2005 target – the achievement of gender parity in both primary and secondary schooling – has not been met. In response to this, UNESCO undertook in late 2004 a strategic review of its post-Dakar role in EFA and agreed on a set of measures to reinforce its capacities and actions to enable it to play a leading, pro-active and more effective role in accelerating progress towards the Dakar goals. These are complemented by ongoing consultations with key EFA partners, particularly the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, to agree on the specific contributions of each stakeholder and to facilitate the preparation of a Joint Action Plan for achieving EFA by 2015.

Since the heart of EFA activity lies at the country level, this Round Table offers a useful opportunity to widen the scope of these consultations to the world’s Ministers of Education, and explore practical ways to address the EFA challenges, building on positive examples in different parts of the world.

Objectives

- To identify and assess policy reforms, strategies and innovations that have led to successes in EFA in specific contexts, and also to address the major challenges that still remain. These should serve as the basis for actions to accelerate progress towards EFA;

- To exchange ideas and experiences on ways to enhance the mobilization of domestic resources for education, particularly basic education, and to explore ways of channelling new development aid commitments to EFA in line with the Monterrey Compact and the Paris Declaration;

- To examine and learn from experience of EFA partnerships between State and non-State actors, with concrete recommendations for improved collaboration and coordination of international efforts, especially at country level;

- To obtain critical input and advice on UNESCO’s EFA strategy and Joint Action Plan to achieve EFA by 2015 and on UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 (34 C/4); and

- To reach broad agreement on strategies to be adopted by governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector in order to accelerate the process towards achieving EFA goals by 2015.

Each session will include short presentations by a lead commentator or keynote speaker, followed by interventions by a number of panellists. Adequate time will be left for debate among the Ministers.
Friday, 7 October 2005

9.30 - 10 a.m.: Opening Session

Overview by Koïchiro MATSUURA, Director-General of UNESCO

10 - 11.15 a.m.: Session I: Five years after Dakar: Overview of Progress and Challenges in EFA

CHAIR
India - Mr Arjun SINGH, Minister of Human Resource Development

LEAD COMMENTATOR
Mr Nicholas BURNETT, Director EFA Global Monitoring Report

STATEMENT
Ms Rima SALAH, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF on “The 2005 Gender Parity Goal: Progress and Challenges”

PANELLISTS
Oman - Mr Yahya Bin Saud AL SULAIMI, Minister of Education
Kenya - Mr George SAITOTI, Minister of Education
U.S.A. - Ms Margaret SPELLINGS, Secretary of State for Education

Some countries have made remarkable progress in EFA, in many cases by pursuing innovative reforms, backed by a strong political commitment and a robust long-term vision for education. Learning from different countries’ experiences, this session will highlight the lessons that can be learnt from these successes and draw attention to the contribution of education to broader development goals. However, there are major barriers to the attainment of EFA, and the EFA Global Monitoring Reports have revealed that, at current rates of progress, the world is unlikely to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. There are still more than 100 million out-of-primary-school children and an estimated 771 million adult illiterates. In primary education, girls’ enrolment lags behind that of boys in 40% of countries, while gender disparities are more pronounced in secondary and tertiary levels as well as in literacy. Achieving EFA goals in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States, and South and West Asia will require at least the doubling of efforts made over the previous decade. When judged by the EFA Development Index (EDI), which provides a summary measure of progress towards four of the six EFA goals (UPE, gender, literacy and quality), 28 countries have EDI values below 0.80 – far from achieving the goals. Most, but not all, of these countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The session will highlight policy reforms, strategies and innovations that have led to success in achieving EFA in specific contexts and should serve to accelerate progress in countries that are lagging behind. In their interventions, the Ministers may wish to address the following key questions:

• How can international action accelerate the policy, structural and institutional reforms that are needed at the national level to achieve EFA?
• How can the international community best support government and civil society initiatives to enrol and retain out-of-school children in school, particularly girls, the disabled, children affected by HIV/AIDS and children from poor households, rural areas, urban slums and ethnic minorities?
• How can UNESCO assist in building the capacity of Member States to establish and manage effective school systems, particularly through innovations to decentralize and engage local communities?

Discussion

11.15 – 11.30 a.m.: Coffee break

11.30 a.m.- 1 p.m.: Session I: Five years after Dakar: Overview of Progress and Challenges in EFA (continued)

1.00 p.m.: Lunch break

3 – 4.15 p.m.: Session II: Resource Mobilization and Aid Effectiveness for EFA

CHAIR
Denmark - Ms Ulla TØRNÆS, Minister of Development Cooperation

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
OECD - Mr Kiyotaka AKASAKA, Deputy Secretary General

PANELLISTS
Mozambique - Mr Aires Bonifacio ALI, Minister of Education and Culture
Guatemala - Ms Maria del Carmen ACEÑA DE FUENTES, Minister of Education
Bangladesh - Mr Muhammad Osman FARRUK, Minister of Education

At the Dakar World Education Forum, the international community clearly stated that funding EFA is primarily a responsibility of national governments. While the bulk of financing for EFA comes from national budgets, levels of aid dependence in education may rise up to 50 per cent in certain countries. Promise of additional aid in 2005, for instance by the G8 group of countries, poses the question of how to channel some of these new funds to meeting the EFA goals. Donor coordination is necessary to reduce the transaction costs for recipient countries. The partners involved – multilateral and bilateral agencies – are now addressing this expeditiously, in particular through the coordinating framework offered by the FTI. If aid is to be effective, three core principles of international good practice should be followed, as indicated in the Paris Declaration: first, the importance of sound nationally-owned policies; second, the close alignment of funding-agency support with the priorities of national governments; and, third, the harmonization of donor practice. Based on country experiences, the session will explore the viable and sustainable ways to fill the actual financing gaps through internal resource mobilisation and external funding, and to use these resources more effectively. To this end, the Round Table may wish to address the following questions:

• How can developing countries intensify efforts to strengthen national commitment to EFA and improve budgetary allocations to basic education?
• How can developing countries exercise effective leadership in coordinating aid in support of national plans and strategies and ensure that donors’ actions are better harmonized, more consistent and have a collectively beneficial impact?
• How can we ensure that additional aid commitments are channelled to education and EFA and utilised more efficiently in countries?
• How can UNESCO support Member States, particularly fragile states, in meeting the requirements of the Monterrey Compact and Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness?

Discussion

4.15 – 4.30 p.m.: Coffee break

4.30 – 6 p.m.: Session II: Resource Mobilization and Aid Effectiveness for EFA

Saturday, 8 October 2005

10 – 12 a.m.: Session III: Strengthening EFA Partnerships at Country Level

CHAIR
Egypt - Mr Ahmed Gamal El-din MOUSSA, Minister of Education

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
Civil Society - Mr Kailash SATYARTHI, Chair, Global Campaign for Education
Private Sector - Mr Richard SAMANS, Managing Director, World Economic Forum, Davos

PANELLISTS
Pakistan - Mr Javed Ashraf QAZI, Minister of Education
Colombia - Ms Cecilia Maria VELEZ WHITE, Minister of Education
Azerbaijan - Mr Misir MARDANOV, Minister of Education

The effort to reach the EFA goals in each country must be centred on a plan for the Education Sector within a national development strategy, with broad ownership by a wide range of EFA stakeholders. Government commitment to EFA should lead to broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by cooperation with regional and international agencies and institutions. Experience from many countries has clearly shown that, without strong involvement of different government sectors/ministries or increased support from civil society and the private sector, it is difficult to guarantee the provision of quality basic education. Stronger partnerships are crucial to address core issues such as girls’ education, providing education for the most disadvantaged (the poor, people in rural areas and slums, minorities, disabled, etc.), and arresting the spread of HIV/AIDS, in particular.

To fulfil its mandate as lead coordinator of EFA partners, UNESCO has worked to strengthen partnerships and alliances within the EFA movement and to bring in new or under-represented partners, such as civil society and the private sector. Partnership with the World Bank is mainly exercised through the Fast-Track Initiative, which UNESCO has duly supported. Nine multi-partner initiatives, known as EFA Flagships, have been established as vehicles for synergy and partnership with other UN agencies. By strengthening and expanding the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO/EFA), UNESCO has contributed to reinforcing partnerships with civil society. It has further facilitated the regionalization of the CCNGO/EFA and the formation of civil society networks and alliances in the South, including NGOs and teachers’ unions. UNESCO has taken steps to broadening EFA partnerships to include the private sector. These international efforts aim to give support to national EFA planning and implementation.
The session will highlight the value of broadening and deepening partnerships between governments (North-South and South-South), as well as between governments, civil society, and the private sector, with concrete recommendations for improved collaboration and coordination at country level to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals. In their interventions, the Ministers may wish to address the following questions:

- **How can developing country governments intensify partnerships – including those with civil society and the private sector – for the planning, coordination and service delivery of EFA in a way that ensures greater impact and better outcomes?**
- **How can Ministries of Education develop maximum synergy with other related sectors (health, women’s development, social welfare, agriculture and rural development, etc.) for a more integrated and effective approach to EFA?**

**Discussion**

12 noon - 1 p.m.: Session IV: UNESCO’s Role and Future Strategy in EFA

**CHAIR**
Argentina - Mr Daniel Fernando FILMUS, Minister of Education

**LEAD COMMENTATOR**
Mr Peter SMITH, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

**PANELLISTS**
- Nigeria - Ms Chinwa Nora OBAJI, Minister of Education
- Norway - Ms Kristin CLEMET, Minister of Education
- Malaysia - Mr Tun Hussein HISHAMMUDDIN, Minister of Education

Following the Strategic Review, UNESCO’s EFA strategy has been better refined to articulate the Organization’s response to the EFA challenge over the next ten years, in its role both as the specialized UN agency for education and as lead coordinator of EFA. The strategy is structured around four strategic objectives, corresponding to four areas that call for action on the part of UNESCO: (1) to deliver policy advice and capacity building in support of planning for EFA in the context of sector-wide approaches and national poverty reduction strategies; (2) to promote enhanced international coordination, monitoring, and advocacy for EFA; (3) to lead international initiatives in three areas of comparative advantage for UNESCO, namely Literacy for Empowerment, Teacher Training in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and education; and (4) to assist in the development of quality education as a key to the development, health and well-being of individuals.

UNESCO intends to move the international community to a higher level of policy coherence and to target and concentrate its efforts where the needs are greatest, from Least Developed Countries, Sub-Saharan Africa and the E-9 countries to learners in the most difficult circumstances. At country level, UNESCO is seeking to integrate its expanded field office network into UN Country Team efforts, to ensure that it makes substantial contributions on issues falling within its fields of competence, and to play an increasingly active and constructive role in the context of UN-led exercises, such as CCA, UNDAF, FTI and PRSP processes\(^1\), as well as countries without a permanent UNESCO field office presence. The session aims at broadening consultations on

---

UNESCO’s EFA strategy and Joint Action Plan to achieve EFA by 2015. The Round Table may wish to address the following question:

- Given that support to the national level is at the heart of the Joint Action Plan, how can UNESCO ensure that its advocacy, coordinating and monitoring roles add maximum value at this level?
- How can UNESCO’s programme interventions in EFA be better synchronized with other UN partners and donors, particularly at the country level?
- How can UNESCO’s institutes and regional, cluster and national offices provide better support to EFA planning and implementation in different countries?

1 p.m.:  *Lunch break*

3 - 4.30 p.m.: *Session IV: UNESCO’s Role and future strategy in EFA (continued)*

*Discussion*

4.30 - 5 p.m.: Coffee break*

5 - 6 p.m.: *Adoption of the Communiqué and Closing session*

**CHAIR**

*Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO*

---

* Text of Communiqué to be finalized