Sixth Conference

of Ministers of Education
and Those Responsible for
Economic Planning in
African Member States

Organized by UNESCO
with the co-operation
of ECA and OAU

Dakar,
8-11 July 1991

Final Report
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States

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FINAL REPORT
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INTRODUCTION

Organization and scope of the Conference

1. The sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States (MINEDAF VI) met in Dakar from 8 to 11 July 1991 at the invitation of the Government of Senegal. It was organized by UNESCO with the co-operation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

2. The Conference was convened by the Director-General of UNESCO in pursuance of resolution 1.1 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-fifth session. In accordance with the provisions of the Work Plan of the Approved Programme and Budget for 1990-1991 (25 C/5, paragraph 01106), the Conference was to discuss in particular, within the framework of international mobilization on behalf of education, ‘the elimination of illiteracy in Africa’ and priorities for regional and international co-operation in education.

3. Pursuant to the decision taken by the Executive Board, the 51 African Member States of the Organization were invited to take part in the Conference. A total of 46 Member States accepted the invitation and the delegations included 24 ministers and deputy ministers. Observers from the Holy See, representatives of the organizations of the United Nations system and observers from other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations also accepted the Director-General’s invitation. Altogether, the Conference was attended by 212 delegates and observers. The list of participants is annexed to this report.

Preparation of the Conference

4. The previous five regional conferences on educational policy and co-operation in Africa focused on the following themes: Addis Ababa, 1961: adoption of an outline plan for African educational development; Abidjan, 1964: consideration of the financing of national education plans; Nairobi, 1968: problems of education and scientific training in Africa; Lagos, 1976: educational reforms and innovations; Harare, 1982: review of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan and new guidelines for the next 20 years, in particular with respect to the eradication of illiteracy, the renewal of science and technology teaching, and higher education for the development of African societies. The sixth Conference, coming as it did after the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien 1990) and the proclamation of 1990 as International Literacy Year by the United Nations, was to focus on basic education and literacy and identify strategies for the decade.

5. In order to provide material for discussion at the Conference, the Secretariat prepared the main working document entitled ‘Educational strategies for the 1990s in Africa: Promotion of literacy training and basic education for development’ (ED-91/MINEDAF/3).

6. The following reference documents were also prepared for the Conference:

   Educational development in Africa: Statistical review (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF. 1), prepared by UNESCO;

   Evaluation report on the implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.2), prepared by UNESCO;
Priorities for economic and social development in the 1990s (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.3), prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;

Inter-African co-operation for educational development (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.4), prepared by the Organization of African Unity;

Synthesis of the evaluation report on the follow-up to MINEDAF conferences and advisory bodies in the field of education in Africa (BREDA/91/EPVMF.VI/0163) prepared by the Secretariat.

7. A preparatory meeting of experts convened by the Director-General of UNESCO was held immediately prior to the Conference. This meeting was attended by 60 experts from the African Member States and by representatives of the United Nations system and observers from intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations.

8. The opening meeting of the experts’ proceedings was chaired by H.E. Mr Andre Sonko, Minister of Education of Senegal, in the presence of Mr Thomas Keller, Assistant Director-General, Director of the Dakar Regional Office, representing the Director-General of UNESCO. At the end of the opening meeting, the following Bureau was elected:

Chairman : Mr Bougouma Ngom (Senegal);

Vice-Chairmen : Mr E.J. Chanakira (Zimbabwe);
Mr Hedi Bouchouch (Tunisia);
Ms Maria de Carrilho (Mozambique);

Rapporteur : Mr Rajayswar Bhowon (Mauritius).

9. At the end of their discussions, the experts, who were to consider the substantive items on the agenda of the Conference of Ministers, summarized their conclusions in a report submitted to the Director-General, who referred it to the Conference.

Opening of the Conference

10. The Conference was opened at 10 a.m. on 8 July 1991 at the Conference Centre of the ‘Meridien President’ Hotel in Dakar.

11. Following some brief words of welcome by H.E. Mr Andre Sonko, Minister of Education of Senegal, Mr Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, made a speech and H.E. Mr Habib Thiam, Prime Minister of Senegal, delivered the inaugural address of the Conference.

12. The Director-General prefaced his speech with a quotation from Cheikh Anta Diop, who, in a penetrating vision of the shape of things to come written at the beginning of the 1980s, had said that ‘we are witnessing a moral and spiritual rebirth of peoples everywhere: a new African moral awareness and a new national temperament are evolving before our very eyes’. Going on to extol the wisdom, sensibility, talent and art of Africa, the Director-General said that the Conference was taking place at a time ripe with expectation for the continent. He thanked the Head of State, President Abdou Diouf, and the Senegalese authorities for agreeing to host the MINEDAF VI Conference and greeted all those present at the opening ceremony, in particular the ambassadors and representatives of the United Nations system.
13. He noted the persistent severe economic crisis facing the countries of the region as well as the deteriorating educational situation, which was characterised by high illiteracy rates, particularly among girls and women, a fall in the gross enrolment ratio from 79 to 72 per cent during the 1980s and a decline in financial for primary education.

14. He stressed the need for a gradual widening of access to basic education as a precondition for survival, and for an improvement in living conditions, the inculcation of attitudes of tolerance and understanding and the promotion of science and technology. He emphasized the role of higher education vis-à-vis basic education for all.

15. He further noted that the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien in March 1990, had put basic education on the agenda of the international community for the 1990s through its publication of the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. UNESCO was co-operating on this basis with many countries and with its principal partners (UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank) in follow-up activities to Jomtien.

16. He reminded participants that the central focus of MINEDAF VI was the development of basic education for all; in that context, account would have to be taken of the proper articulation of basic education with the other types of education and its contribution to the cultural, social and economic development of society, and the need for further progress in democratising education and enhancing learning.

17. He mentioned UNESCO’s ‘Priority: Africa’ programmes, the activities of the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa and the role of UNESCO’s Regional Offices in Africa. She emphasised that the Draft Programme and Budget for the next biennium would focus on three main target groups: women, the least developed countries and Africa.

18. Referring to Recommendation No. 2 of MINEDAF V concerning the eradication of illiteracy in Africa, he said that the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa launched in 1984 had already made it possible to achieve a number of objectives. With a view to ensuring that this trend continued, he appealed to Member States and the international community to create the conditions and commitment needed for the promotion of education for all. Noting that Africa was in a situation of emergency as regards education, he called for more multilateral and bilateral support. Finally, he stressed that Member States should have the political will to promote education for all.

19. In his opening address, H.E. Mr Habib Thiam welcomed the Director-General and all the participants on behalf of the President of the Republic and the people of Senegal.

20. Referring to co-operation between Senegal and UNESCO, the Prime Minister spoke of his country’s espousal of the Organization’s principles and ideals since its accession to independence and its determination to play a part in furthering UNESCO’s work. Senegal’s commitment to the Organization was attested, inter alia, by the presence in Dakar of the UNESCO Regional Office, which was an instrument for concerted action, a meeting-place and a setting for continuous exchanges of ideas.

21. The Prime Minister noted that each Conference of Ministers had been the occasion for a major step forward in joint reflection, sharing of experiences and ideas and concerted action in laying down priorities. The MINEDAF VI Conference was being held in an African context characterised, in political terms, by Namibia’s accession to independence and the abolition of the
institutional pillars of apartheid and, in economic terms, by the persistent economic crisis. In his view, the crucial question to be addressed in any field, be it economics, science and technology, the environment, health or education, was how to build up individuals’ skills and capabilities in order to enable them, alone or in groups, to meet the many and varied challenges to their lives and often to their very survival posed by socio-economic and ecological change. Of course the whole process drew its meaning and ultimate value from human beings and their quest for peace and happiness.

22. Taking these ideas as his starting-point, the Prime Minister expressed the view that education, as a prerequisite for the full development of the individual’s potential and skills, was the chief means of ensuring that all resources were put to the best possible use. Every African government had a duty to pay special attention to education, evolving educational strategies that were integrated into economic, social and cultural development and marshalling all domestic resources with that end in view. Referring to the international community’s commitment to translate the World Declaration on Education for All into practical action, the Prime Minister suggested that the four major agencies that had initiated the Jomtien Conference should look into the possibility of assisting the African States, both individually and collectively, through the adoption of special support measures designed to impart added urgency to the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy launched in Africa by UNESCO in 1984, whose lines of emphasis, objectives, principles, procedures and framework were in keeping with the provisions of the world plan of action for education for all.

23. The Prime Minister also stressed the vital importance for development in Africa of the role of higher education, especially at university level, and of inter-African co-operation in that area.

24. In conclusion, Mr Habib Thiam expressed the hope that the Conference would come up with proposals and strategies designed to step up action by UNESCO and the Member States in the educational and socio-economic fields.

Organization of the proceedings

25. After an informal consultation among the heads of delegations, the Conference, acting on a proposal by the head of the delegation of Nigeria, elected the Minister of Education of Senegal, Mr André Sonko, President of the Conference by acclamation.

26. Under agenda item 3, the Conference adopted its rules of procedure (ED-91/MINEDAF/2). Under agenda item 4, on the proposal of the head of the delegation of Burkina Faso, the Conference elected unanimously as its Vice-Presidents:

H.E. Mr Luis Filipe Da Silva,
Deputy Minister of Education (Angola);

H.E. Mr Adolphe Nahayo,
Minister of Crafts, Vocational Training and Youth (Burundi);

Dr Yusef Salah El-Din Kotb,
Former President, Ain Shams University,
Director, Science Teaching Development Centre (Egypt);

H.E. Mr P.M. Mabathoana,
Assistant Minister of Education (Lesotho);
Mr N. Amanya Mushega, Minister of Education (Uganda).

Professor M.J. Shuaibu of Nigeria was elected Rapporteur-General.

27. The Conference then adopted its agenda (ED-91/MINEDAF/1) and the suggestions concerning the organization of its work (ED-91/MINEDAF/INF.2). It was decided to consider all agenda items in plenary meetings and to discuss items 8, 9 and 10 as a single unit.

28. On the proposal of the President of the Conference, Mr Bougouma Ngom, who had chaired the Meeting of Experts (2-6 July 1991), presented the final report of that meeting and the preliminary draft recommendations concerning the main agenda items.

29. At four plenary meetings, lasting three hours each, starting on the afternoon of Monday, 8 July, and ending on the morning of Wednesday, 10 July, the Conference discussed simultaneously three substantive agenda items, that is to say item 8 ‘Evaluation of educational development in Africa during the 1980s and implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V’, item 9 ‘Priorities for social and economic development in Africa in the 1990s, having regard in particular to the promotion of literacy and basic education’, and item 10 ‘Co-operation in educational development in Africa: guidelines and priorities for subregional, regional and international cooperation, with special attention to the follow-up to the ministerial conferences and to the existing advisory committees in the field of education in Africa’.

Special meeting: Award of the Nessim Habif prizes

30. On Tuesday, 9 July, at 12.30 p.m., the Director-General, Mr Federico Mayor, chaired a special meeting to award the Nessim Habif prize designed to encourage and reward efforts to produce school textbooks and other teaching materials. The Director-General said that the awards were to be viewed in the context of International Literacy Year (1990), activities under the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa and UNESCO’s follow-up programme to the World Conference on Education for All.

31. Prizes were awarded to the following institutions and individuals:

   The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation, Tamale;

   Mr Alfred Efta, A. Assiamah (Institute of Adult Education, Legon, Accra);

   Dr Mamadou Ndiaye (Department of General and Black African Linguistics, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar);

   Mr Kofi N. Gbekobou (Department of Lifelong Education and Pedagogical Action, DIFOP, Lome).

32. Honourable mention was made of the following institutions and individuals:

   The Centre for Literacy and Adult Education of the Ministry of Community Services, Malawi;

   The Department of Adult Education of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria;
Mr Amadou Diallo, Department of General and Black African Linguistics, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar.

33. After the prize-giving ceremony, the Director-General awarded UNESCO’s gold/silver medal to His Excellency Buddy James Wilfred Wentworth, head of the delegation of Namibia, to mark his country’s accession to independence.

34. The Director-General also awarded UNESCO’s silver medal to His Excellency, Andre Sonko, Minister of Education of Senegal and President of the Conference.

35. The draft final report, the draft recommendations and the Declaration were considered and adopted at a plenary meeting on the afternoon of Thursday, 11 July, prior to the closure of the proceedings.

Closure of the Conference

36. The closing ceremony of the MINEDAF VI Conference took place at 5 p.m. on 11 JULY 1991 at ‘Meridien President’ Hotel in Dakar.

37. At the closing ceremony, speeches were made by the Assistant Director-General for Education, Mr Colin N. Power, and the President of the Conference, the Honourable Mr Andre Sonko, Minister of Education of Senegal.

38. In his speech, the Assistant Director-General for Education, Mr Colin Power, recalled that MINEDAF V had planted the idea of the Regional Programme for the Eradication of illiteracy in Africa. The development of that programme had been quickened under ILY and its scope had been expanded by the broad view taken at the Jomtien Conference.

39. Mr Power observed that MINEDAF VI had been a rich learning experience both in the information and ideas shared by delegates and in the contributions made by UNESCO’s partners, ECA and OAU, especially in the background documents. The five recommendations of the Conference were recognized as having been conceived within a framework of realism and participants were assured that the Director-General of UNESCO would act promptly on them.

40. Particular stress was put on the need to develop affordable alternatives. Continuing research on viable alternatives and the identification of actual experiences that worked were considered to be of key importance. In this respect it was acknowledged that many examples of country and sub-regional action existed. However, it was felt that African alternatives for education in rural settings and marginal urban areas were urgently required.

41. He explained that the 1992-1993 period would be a period of concrete activities aimed mainly at developing national capacities to support national plans of action. BREDA and field offices in their new role as primarily operational entities would spearhead the specific technical actions that would take place.

42. Participants were reminded of the importance UNESCO attached to co-operation: between countries, South-South as well as South-North; between organisations, whether multilateral, bilateral or NGOs; between institutions, whether universities or UNESCO clubs; and also between people. It was urged that UNESCO should continue to promote international solidarity and understanding through education by forging links between pupils, teachers and parents.
43. Finally, the Assistant Director-General thanked the Government and people of Senegal for their hospitality and the Chairman for his conduct of the meeting. In closing he urged action on the recommendations.

44. In his closing address, His Excellency Mr Andre Sonko, Minister of Education of Senegal and President of the Conference, thanked the President of the Republic for his support for the holding of the Conference.

45. He thanked the Prime Minister, who had delivered a speech of great import at the opening meeting and congratulated the Director-General and his assistants for the excellent preparatory work and the faultless organization of the Conference.

46. He warmly complimented the participants on the quality of their deliberations and the pertinence of the recommendations adopted.

47. He said that the development of basic education called for the closest possible national solidarity and a broad-based partnership within a cohesive regional policy of co-operation among African countries. The Conference had prepared the ground for progress in this direction by recommending the implementation of a regional plan of action for basic education for all and the setting up of an appropriate follow-up mechanism.

48. On the strength of its results, concluded the Minister, the Dakar Conference, which had borne the stamp of realism throughout, gave every reason to hope for a new departure and a new upsurge in the development of education in Africa.

**Vote of thanks**

49. The Honourable Minister of Education for Nigeria, Professor **Babs Fafunwa**, thanked UNESCO for producing high-quality documents for the Conference.

50. He moved a vote of thanks to the President of the Republic of Senegal and the Prime Minister for the warm welcome shown by the people of Senegal.

51. He further commended the President of the Conference, H.E. Mr Andre Sonko, Minister of Education of Senegal, on his competence in handling the discussions and his evident authority in conducting the proceedings.

52. Finally, he thanked Mr Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, for according such high priority to the development of education in Africa, for the recommendations concerning the assistance expected of UNESCO and for the efficient organisation of the Conference.
53. In their statements, the heads of delegation thanked the Government of Senegal for the cordial welcome it had extended to all the delegations and congratulated the Minister of Education of the host country on his election as President of the Conference. They also expressed their satisfaction to the Director-General of UNESCO at the excellent quality of the documents prepared for the Conference and made a point of congratulating him on UNESCO’s continuing efforts on behalf of Africa.

54. In their overall assessment of the experts’ report, most speakers said that they had found the conclusions and recommendations of that document relevant and realistic.

55. The following conclusions of the discussions follow the structure of substantive agenda items 8, 9 and 10.
PART I

Evaluation of educational development in Africa during the 1980s and implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V

56. This agenda item invited the Conference to identify the lessons to be drawn from the development of education over the past decade by renaming achievements and failures and the extent to which the recommendations adopted at the previous conference had been implemented.

57. The Conference found useful reference material in three documents provided by the Secretariat. These were the main working document (ED-91/MINEDAF/3), Chapter I of which was devoted to the development of education in the 1980s; the document, on the development of education in Africa: a statistical review (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.1); and the document on the evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.2).

58. The main features of the educational situation, viewed against the social and economic background of the 1980s, emerged as follows from these documents:

- the severe adverse impact of the economic and social crisis on educational development in the face of the challenge of democratisation and relevance;
- educational growth inhibited in both quantitative and qualitative terms by the tendency for the sector to stagnate or regress;
- cutbacks in resources allocated to the education sector;
- a deterioration in teaching and learning conditions.

59. The discussions highlighted the efforts and achievements of the Member States between 1980 and 1990 and also made it possible to gauge the extent to which the recommendations of MINEDAF V had been implemented.

Efforts

60. Since 1980 most Member States had taken action to expand education in quantitative terms and improve its quality, and had made progress in those areas. They had all endeavoured in a wide variety of individual situations, to respond to the challenge of democratisation and relevance. The different initiatives had been aimed at introducing innovations or reforms in education systems so as to meet existing needs more effectively. The prime purpose of the observed tendency to set up more broad-based and diversified educational structures was to provide for the education of the largest possible number of people through methods that were consistent with the needs, interests and motivations of the different target groups concerned. Programmes had accordingly been reviewed in the light of the needs of the community and endeavours had been made to ensure that education was more relevant to the cultural environment in which children lived.

61. Educational policy issues had received attention since the Jomtien Conference in several countries in the region. Some countries, for example, had drawn up programmes for the education sector and adopted education acts and other legislative documents focusing on basic education to
meet basic learning needs. These needs comprised both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem-solving) and 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. Action plans on basic education had also been introduced. Some strategies aimed at the eradication of illiteracy, the reinforcement of basic education and the prevention of drop-out had been adopted.

62. In their endeavours to expand the education system and improve its quality, some States had undertaken school building programmes, often supported by strong local authority participation. New approaches and strategies, such as the introduction of two-shift or multi-grade classes, had been adopted to make optimum use of existing resources.

63. The training of educational personnel had continued to receive considerable attention. Efforts had been made in every instance to improve teacher training through the strengthening of initial and on-the-job training programmes. Indeed, one of the main concerns in most Member States was to upgrade teachers’ qualifications and to provide them with refresher training. Further training courses and distance training programmes were frequently organised for that purpose. In some cases, especially countries at war or recently independent countries that had to rely on poorly qualified teachers, new methods had been introduced to increase the pace of teacher training. Steps had also been taken to set up curriculum development centres and centres for the design and production of teaching materials. Some Member States had implemented policies for distributing school textbooks to all pupils in the country.

64. Most Member States had already embarked on projects to set up different types of adult and out-of-school education, with the aim of supplementing formal education and forging a closer relationship with it. Action had been taken in the field of literacy to train personnel and to prepare programmes and teaching materials. In some cases, agencies or other structures had been created to follow up and co-ordinate literacy activities. A variety of popular education centres, youth centres and centres for the advancement of women and for rural development had been opened. Adolescents leaving school without being able to continue their studies or find a job were a priority target in some cases for educational programmes aimed at their reintegration.

65. In order to make education more relevant to the learner’s cultural environment, a number of countries use African languages at different levels of education. While the pedagogical value of teaching children in their mother tongue was generally acknowledged, some participants drew attention to the need for an outward-looking attitude and for a mutually beneficial relationship between African languages and those used for international communication.

66. The Member States viewed the introduction of science and technology education as an absolute necessity at all levels of education. It was impossible for any country to develop in the modern world without a scientifically trained work force that was able not only to understand and adapt scientific and technological innovations but also to continue using and improving traditional technology. To that end, some countries had launched programmes for the teaching of science and technology, focusing, in primary education, on programmes that were strongly geared towards prevocational training. In that connection, some States had considered the possibility of introducing productive work into education in order to instil a clearer understanding of the need to show respect for manual work and to prevent or contain the drift of the population away from rural areas.
Constraints

67. The review of action taken with a view to developing education in Africa during the period from 1980 to 1990 was useful in identifying the main impediments to such development, which was seriously flagging at the present time. It emerged from the discussions that, despite the efforts made and the real progress achieved between 1980 and 1990, there were still persistent quantitative and qualitative differentials between countries and within them.

68. All African countries were having to contend with increasingly severe economic and financial constraints in the field of education. For a number of years, the decline in the volume of resources allocated to education domestically and internationally, from both multilateral and bilateral sources, had had serious consequences that were inhibiting the development of education systems, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to mobilize resources. The percentage of GNP devoted to education was shrinking. The gravity of the situation could be primarily gauged from the degree of mobilization of the population, who had tended to lose interest in school, since its aims did not always cater for their needs and those of society at large. Although steps had been taken to re-allocate the resources devoted to particular levels of education, such as the secondary and higher levels, the situation was a precarious one and had an adverse effect on aspirations to universalise primary education. The inadequacy of funds was reflected in a lack of equipment and installations, difficulties that were compounded by the shortage of qualified teachers.

69. The consequences of population growth in the region were also worrying from the point of view of the universalisation of primary education and the elimination of illiteracy, aims that were still difficult or even impossible to achieve in some countries in the near future.

70. According to Member States' qualitative analyses, negative developments were discernible in spite of the genuine progress recorded since 1980. The prevalence of academic failure (repetition and drop-out) pointed to the inefficiency of education systems in the present context.

71. Although efforts had been made to strengthen the bodies responsible for educational planning and administration, they had not gone far enough and had not led to any tangible progress in the reduction of costs and the rational identification and allocation of resources, or in day-to-day management at the local level and in individual establishments. In most States, planning and administration systems were unduly centralised and made no provision for decentralized management, in which local authorities had to be increasingly involved. In that connection, development of source data for micro-planning purposes was desirable.

72. It was essential to involve both the central and local authorities, in their respective areas of responsibility, in meeting quantitative and qualitative educational needs. In that context, the discussions stressed the importance of popular participation in resource mobilisation, decisionmaking and educational administration. It was frequently noted that, in countering illiteracy, every effort had to be made to encourage active and organized participation by the population groups concerned in drawing up literacy programmes and determining their content, and to associate with these activities such entities as public authorities, business firms, trade unions, religious authorities, development services, and other bodies. Resource mobilisation efforts depended first and foremost on the development of new alliances and more effective partnerships between the State and all the national and international organisations and institutions involved.
Limited implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V

73. With regard to the implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V, the economic recession had curbed ambitions to such an extent that the recommendations themselves were now being called into question from the point of view of both their number and variety and the conditions in which they were to be implemented. The question was raised as to whether or not the objectives were themselves realistic. This was tied to a general feeling that the targets had not been properly set and that the actions to be carried out had not been given an order of priority. Attention was drawn to the difficulty of implementing 18 recommendations covering all aspects of the education system at a time when resources were dwindling. It was felt that better results could have been achieved in many cases if an order of priorities had been laid down. Moreover, the Member States would have discharged their responsibilities more effectively if the proposals regarding procedures and machinery for following up the implementation of the recommendations had referred to the need for follow-up by the States themselves.

74. Economic difficulties and social and political upheavals were often cited as the major causes of non-attainment of the targets set by MINEDAF V. Failing the provision of adequate financing and support by the international community, structural adjustment and the reform programme policy had inevitably hastened the decline in the living conditions of the vast majority of Africans. Adjustment had had a particularly adverse effect on social development and had contributed to the unfavourable trends in education. The debt burden had aggravated the steadily worsening conditions of economies that had been badly hit by the deep-seated world economic recession and had been penalized by an unfair system of economic relations. In some cases, war and natural disasters had left millions of people, mostly children and women, in a state of physical and mental distress. The wind of democratisation that was blowing through the continent provided a favourable environment not only for free individual and collective endeavour but also for bringing to light all the problems that had previously been suppressed by the autocratic systems controlling society.
PART II

Priorities of social and economic development in Africa in the 1990s, having regard in particular to the promotion of literacy and basic education

75. The discussions on this agenda item were based on the information contained in Chapter II of document ED-91/MINEDAF/3 ‘New needs and appropriate strategies for the 1990s’ and document ED-91/MINEDAF/REF/3 ‘Priorities for economic and social development in the 1990s’.

76. The Conference voiced grave concern at the climate of crisis prevailing in Africa and wondered what type of education and strategies should be given prominence in order to reverse the tendencies towards stagnation and backsliding observed in the development of education in the 1980s.

77. While reaffirming the pledge made in Harare and reiterated in Jomtien to guarantee every African man and woman full enjoyment of the right to education, the Conference stressed the need to spell out the quantitative and qualitative objectives capable of being achieved by the year 2000 in the context of comprehensive national social and economic development policies, given the limited volume of resources available.

Global objectives

78. In that connection, the Conference undertook to give priority to basic education over all other forms of education, while maintaining an integrated approach and, with a view to universalising access to education, to foster, as a matter of priority, the general provision of basic education for all children of school age, as well as the protection and education of young children, since that could not be dissociated from basic education.

79. The Conference referred to the particularly unfavourable position of women, on whom the transformation of African society nevertheless depended, and resolved to give special attention to the schooling of girls, in respect of whom special structures and measures would have to be studied.

80. It decided unanimously to adopt a global strategy for the Africa region, based on an interactive multisectoral approach, with the aim of achieving at least the following objectives by the year 2000:

- reducing illiteracy by half compared with its 1990 level (from 52 to 26 per cent);
- exceeding the regional gross enrolment ratio attained in 1980 by reversing the downward trend recorded in the meantime (the ratio decreased from 79 to 72 per cent between 1980 and 1988);
- developing educational facilities to improve the quality of basic education.

Differentiated objectives and strategies

81. In connection with the priorities adopted, a consensus emerged on the need to devise approaches and strategies that took into account the wide variety of situations prevailing in the following three groups of countries: Group A with a net enrolment ratio of less than 50 per cent;
Group B with a ratio of between 50 and 70 per cent; Group C with a ratio of more than 70 per cent.

82. It was therefore decided to adopt national strategies differentiated according to the degree of development of basic education, with a view to implementing the global strategy:

- countries with a net enrolment ratio of less than 40 per cent would aim at doubling that ratio;
- countries with a net enrolment ratio of between 40 and 49 per cent would aim at a target of 75 per cent;
- countries with a net enrolment ratio of between 50 and 70 per cent would aim at a target of 80 per cent;
- the other countries would aim at universal school enrolment.

83. In the case of the Group C countries, in which the objective of generalising primary education had been broadly achieved, efforts should be focused on enhancing the quality of the education provided, especially by expanding early childhood developmental activities and action in adult education aimed at creating a more literate environment that would make the learning process easier for children.

84. With regard to the reduction in the illiteracy ratio, each country should decide on the age group to be taken into consideration and should reduce the national illiteracy ratio to half its current level by the year 2000. Close attention should be given to literacy training for girls and women and other disadvantaged groups, for whom special measures would have to be studied.

85. Considerable emphasis was placed on quality, in particular with a view to underscoring its links with quantitative objectives, which it could help to achieve. As at Jomtien, it was again affirmed that universalisation of education and successful learning outcomes were twin issues that could not be dissociated.

86. The following four approaches were suggested as being likely to have an impact on the quality of education:

- recasting the overall education system in terms of its structures, methods and functioning;
- improving the quality of primary-school leavers and turning them into active participants in the transformation of their environment, in order to ensure greater economic and social well-being;
- improving the quality of the pre- and in-service training of teachers in order to enhance their performance and involve them in the preparation of educational policies;
- improving teaching and learning conditions, infrastructures, methods, content and teaching aids, but also improving the status of the teaching profession and the motivation of educators, and enhancing the learning environment of children.
87. An education systems analysis programme (PASEC) had already been proposed by CONFE-
MEN for the 21 French-speaking countries of Africa and the idea of a regional action plan in support
of national basic education plans had been adopted by that conference. UNICEF had undertaken to
start implementing the programme in co-operation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar.

**Specific strategies**

88. The following four main lines of emphasis for the different strategies were identified:

- **Structural strategies;**
- **strategies internal to the education system;**
- **socio-educational strategies;**
- **transverse strategies aimed at strengthening co-operation.**

89. **Structural strategies** were those most closely bound up with the overall social and econo-
mic development policies of the individual countries. They drew attention to the need to integrate
educational goals into overall development goals, since they entailed making long-term policy deci-
sions on such matters as administrative decentralisation, control of population growth, the variables
in respect of which had to be taken into account in drawing up economic and social policies and in
the planning of development, the formulation of an unambiguous national language policy and the
adoption of multisectoral policies, alongside more practical and shorter-term decisions on, for
example, the strengthening of institutional planning and management capabilities, the abolition of
fee-paying in public education, the re-allocation of resources within the education system in accor-
dance with established priorities and improved redistribution of the national budget to bring it into
line with the priority goals laid down.

90. **Strategies internal to the education system** had evolved to the greatest extent. They were
based on the existing formal system, which was already being changed with a view to improving its
internal and external efficiency. All those measures, which involved such matters as initial and conti-
nuing teacher training, the preparation and production of suitable teaching materials and their distri-
bution among pupils and teachers, the more efficient management of the education system, the rene-
wal of curricula and the streamlining of methods for evaluating learning outcomes and the system
itself, had to be supplemented by measures aimed at ensuring the dovetailing of quantitative and qua-
litative objectives in an imaginative and mutually rewarding way, linking together the different forms
and possibilities of training in an integrated system, and generating synergies through the mutual
reinforcement of the different strategies envisaged. It was for that reason that particular stress was
laid on the need to give more considered thought to the ongoing reforms and innovations in order to
bring about qualitative changes in the existing education system that would foster genuine democra-
tisation and enhancement of the resources and scope of basic education.

91. Efforts had to be focused, in particular, on developing knowledge that was capable of adap-
tation and on fostering the acquisition of a more ready aptitude for change in order to cope with exis-
ting needs, continue to learn in a fast-moving world and bring about change. From that point of view,
the question of using African languages to promote basic education for all deserved to be explored
easier but as a fundamental choice geared to universalising access to such education, with a view to evolving an essential policy of scientific popularisation in basic education and ensuring that development was firmly rooted in African cultures. To that end, the use of African languages should no longer be confined to the first years of primary school but should be extended without limit right up to the highest level and make its impact felt in all spheres of everyday public and political life.

92. In a similar bid to adapt to needs, curriculum reform, which had hitherto been limited in order to ensure uniformity under the traditional school system, should be extended to include the diversification of content so as to cater for the specific needs of each target group and should systematically involve the introduction of population education in line with the socio-economic options to be promoted and of production-oriented education to improve the quality of life and wellbeing.

93. The evaluation of these different changes should, however, be based on comparable standards, take learning outcomes as its basic criterion and promote the evaluation of achievement. Studies should be undertaken to develop systems making it possible to evaluate the individual performance of learners, train teachers accordingly and ensure that the existing systems were adapted for that purpose. Educational research, so often recommended and yet invariably neglected in the actual implementation of educational policies in Africa, should therefore be given high priority. It should address itself to bringing children close to school and schools closer to the environment in which they were situated and, in more general terms, it should concentrate on the integration of educational objectives into overall social and economic development strategies.

94. **Socio-educational strategies** should be based on the considerations set out below. One of the lessons to be learnt from the current economic crisis in Africa was that the mobilization of the people who were the focus of social and economic development represented an essential prerequisite for the success of the strategies adopted. For that reason, it was strongly recommended that the existing practice, which tended to regard the participation of the population in the education system only as a means of mobilising material and financial resources, should be discontinued. In future, all sectors of the population and all communities should be fully-fledged partners in the implementation of policies of basic education for all and, in that capacity, should be associated with all stages involved in the design, programming, implementation and evaluation of those policies.

95. Consideration should therefore be given to ways and means of ensuring that the population played an effective part in such an exercise, and activities aimed at alerting, briefing and educating it should be envisaged for that purpose. Experience showed that it was particularly difficult to involve the most underprivileged groups, and yet it was their needs that had to be catered for as a matter of priority.

96. Such activities could involve specific population categories, such as secondary-school pupils and students who, in view of the knowledge and skills that they had already acquired, should contribute to mutual aid and support strategies, especially on behalf of the most underprivileged children.

97. **Transverse strategies** were appropriate in this context. The Conference therefore endorsed the proposal to organize large-scale literacy campaigns in every country of the Africa region, in which each literate person would teach someone who was illiterate to read and write ‘each one teach one’. Those campaigns, which would be launched from 1992 onwards, should therefore be taken into consideration in national basic education plans from the present stage onwards.
98. In the framework of the transverse strategies, private and especially denominational education should not be viewed as a lucrative activity but as a disinterested association for the purpose of attaining specific common goals in the national context of an overall social and economic policy.

99. It was again made quite clear that the shortage of financial resources should not be allowed to undermine the existing determination to achieve the objectives that had been laid down. Emphasis should first be placed on self-help, with outside assistance merely playing a secondary role. The co-ordination and optimum use of available resources should therefore be a major component of the transverse resource-mobilization strategy, together with the strengthening of partnerships and of inter-African and international co-operation.
PART III

Regional and subregional co-operation in educational development in Africa
with special attention to the follow-up to the ministerial conferences and
to the existing advisory committees in the field of education in Africa

100. The references for the item were Chapter III of the main working document and document ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.4 ‘Inter-African co-operation for educational development’. The attention of the meeting was drawn to the need to take a critical look at the way inter-African co-operation had functioned since MINEDAF V, with a view to evolving more appropriate mechanisms for the 1990s.

Findings

101. On the follow-up to MINEDAF, a study commissioned by the Secretariat had shown that most of the problems of education on the agenda of the Conference had been clearly diagnosed in 1961 at the first-ever MINEDAF, which had also recommended the appropriate modalities for taking care of the ills. Some of the therapeutics (e.g. the reduction of wasteful spending, improved efficiency, etc.) had been almost the same as those prescribed in the 1980s by the international funding agencies. There had not, however, been a systematic effort to follow up the action taken on the early diagnosis and proposed curative measures. Instead, it appeared that there had been a continuous recurrence of the same themes. That was why an institutionalised means of systematic follow-up to MINEDAF needed to be set up.

102. The meeting was also informed of the involvement of the OAU in promoting co-operation in education. In July 1989, the OAU Heads of State (by their resolution 183) had decided to institutionalise a Conference of African Ministers of Education. There had already been some consultation with UNESCO on the subject. The OAU conferences would be held biennially to review the commitments made by African ministers at the MINEDAF conferences and their translation into practice.

Inter-African co-operation

103. Co-operation in African education was not a new phenomenon. It was generally agreed that the tempo and scale of co-operation had begun a downward trend in the 1980s. Since co-operation was indispensable for the development of basic education in the region, early action ought to be taken to strengthen it in all its forms. That applied also to all other levels and forms of education. In that connection, it was generally felt that African experts should be used as much as possible to promote regional co-operation, as a further means of building up African capacity in a variety of areas. A data bank on education systems and a directory of African specialists would be one of the urgent areas of action for UNESCO in that regard.

104. A regional action plan for the development of basic education was considered an appropriate means of reinforcing such African co-operation in the 1990s. It was felt, however, that the development of African languages for use in basic education (especially the exchange of information on linguistic research) should be included in such a regional project. To provide strong support for the project, UNESCO was urged to identify institutions within Member States that already had regional/subregional orientations, so that they could be strengthened.
105. Questions were raised regarding the nature of international assistance. The conditionalities often attached to such aid, the fact that aid was sometimes not strictly related to national needs and the proportion of aid funds consumed by external technical assistance and imported materials had not been altogether helpful for the promotion of basic education in the region. Such aid should be channelled more towards building up national capacity (i.e. training, local sourcing of equipment, etc.). In that connection, it was suggested that the presentation of projects should be improved, so that the portion of the budget to be used in implementing the substance of the project was shown separately from that earmarked for experts. African countries were at the same time urged to exercise greater care in the management of external funds for education as a means of winning donors’ confidence and in order to encourage donor investment in the area of education.

106. Establishing ‘education desks’ within subregional organizations (ECOWAS, SADCC, UDEAC, etc.) was also considered a necessity. Participants felt that regional groupings should be urged to establish such ‘desks’, since they could be an effective means of ensuring that countries within the same subregion took educational issues more seriously.

107. The delegates considered that inter-African co-operation should be strengthened in the following fields:

- development of science and technology education;
- renewal of higher education (institutional co-operation among Member States, joint research efforts, academic and pedagogical training of university teachers, etc.);
- educational research;
- the creation of centres of excellence.

108. Africa still needed specialized personnel for the development of activities ancillary to the promotion of education and for innovative contributions to other areas of socio-economic development.

109. The inability and unwillingness of many African countries to finance existing regional and subregional institutions was considered a serious problem and the participants felt that it should be tackled with all the seriousness it deserved. In addition to action concerning the functioning of the institutions, countries would have to be urged to pay the whole amount of their contributions promptly. Paying attention to this matter would be in keeping with the recent decision of the OAU to reinforce subregional organisations as a step towards achieving eventual continental integration.

110. As far as co-operation with UNESCO was concerned, the participants expressed their appreciation of the contribution that the Organization was making under a number of programmes, for example the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy, the COFORPA project, under which experts had been trained in educational planning and management, and the Advisory Committees on the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy, the Renewal of Science and Technology Teaching, and Higher Education. Over the past decade, the activities of NEIDA had had a marked effect on exchanges relating to educational innovation within the framework of UNESCO. With a view to improving that co-operation, it was suggested that UNESCO’s subregional and representative units in the region should be revitalised and the National Commissions strengthened so that UNESCO could make its presence felt wherever education was provided.
International co-operation

111. North-South co-operation was considered indispensable in the present context of Africa and in keeping with global trends of nations working more closely together. A recent encouraging development had been the increased collaboration among United Nations agencies in the promotion of education. In that connection, the joint sponsoring of the Jomtien Conference on ‘Education for All’ was commended. Those organisations were therefore urged to continue their collaboration in the field in order to help African countries to follow up their commitment to basic education in more concrete forms at the national level. It was with that in mind that UNICEF had decided to support a regional action plan for educational co-operation. Along the same lines, UNIDO was interested in making its own contribution to the development of basic education by promoting the creation of small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) for the production of teaching materials and school equipment and furniture. The NGOs represented at the conference reaffirmed their determination to support the efforts of the African States to achieve the goals of basic education.

112. In the same vein, there should be internal integration of projects related to basic education within Member States. Thus, there should be, within each country, collaboration among various ministries and departments, and between government institutions and non-governmental organisations. Integrated planning, concerted execution and co-operative monitoring of projects should become the norm, as a means of reducing waste, pooling limited national resources and preparing the ground (at the national level) for effective co-operation at the subregional, regional and international levels. It would, in fact, be advisable to establish national co-ordinating committees on educational programmes. Also, in their co-operation with donors, Member States should ensure effective co-ordination of aid, based on well-articulated policies and programmes.

113. With regard to South-South co-operation in the area of education, it was felt that such co-operation should not be limited to the Africa region, but should also be extended to Asian, Pacific, Caribbean and Latin American countries. That was mainly because those other countries had problems similar to the African countries and, in certain cases, some of them had successfully tackled problems of education and development with which Africa was still groping. In that connection, every attempt should be made to associate the South Commission with all aspects of work related to the development of education in Africa. Special mention was made of the need to strengthen NEIDA, which had been conceived in the spirit of South-South co-operation, like its sister institutions in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, etc.

114. The meeting particularly welcomed the offer by a number of countries to open their institutes for educational development (training facilities, material development units, specialised institutions, etc.) to other African States, in particular Nigeria, Morocco and Zaire for planning and Cote d’Ivoire for school textbook production, while Tunisia was already proposing the secondment of its experts to serve in the region. UNESCO was urged to make an up-to-date inventory of such offers and to disseminate information on them.

Follow-up to conferences

115. On the question of a regional mechanism for the follow-up to MINEDAF, the meeting considered that such a mechanism was a necessary condition for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations. They recommended that consideration be given to the possibility of setting up a regional committee within the Regional Office in Dakar for systematic follow-up to the MINEDAF conferences. The committee could replace the existing advisory committees, in
the Advisory Committee on the Renewal of Science and Technology Teaching and the Advisory Committee on Higher Education. They also recommended that the Member States set up appropriate structures at the national level for the implementation of the MINEDAF recommendations.

116. It was also suggested that the follow-up mechanism to be created should, as far as possible:

- not become an extra heavy burden on Member States;
- add to its function the collection of information on the evolution of education in Africa;
- involve the strengthening of the resources and capacity of the UNESCO Regional Office and field offices in Africa to enable them to carry out effectively the work required by their participation in the follow-up mechanism;
- ensure that standard indicators and tools were developed for evaluating attainment in basic education following the emphasis placed at Jomtien on qualitative indicators;
- ensure that reporting on progress (based on quantitative targets) became the responsibility of Member States.

117. In that connection, UNESCO National commissions in Member States would have to be appropriately strengthened (in terms of staff, organizational capacity, etc.) in order to enable them to play their expected role of co-ordination at the national level.

118. The point was stressed that the Africa region was faced with a number of problems that made regional co-operation difficult. Technical facilities for the collection of data and the exchange of information were still rudimentary; worse still, there was usually no sustained follow-up to commitments made by African authorities to collaborate with one another.
PART IV

Recommendations

No. 1: Educational strategies for the 1990s in Africa

The Conference,

Observing that the multifaceted crisis and the burden of debt affecting African societies is growing worse, in spite of the economic policies pursued, especially those aimed at structural adjustment,

Noting the disquieting situation in the education sector, which is beset by severe demographic, economic, financial, socio-political, cultural and environmental constraints that are inhibiting its development,

Aware of the fundamental role that basic education plays in the development of human resources and hence in the overall development of individual societies,

Stressing the importance of science and technology in development,

Anxious to reverse the negative trends in enrolment and literacy that have been observed during the last decade, in the form of a decline in the region’s gross enrolment ratio and an increase in the absolute number of illiterates and in the quality of education generally,

Taking into account the relevant conclusions and recommendations of the World Conference on Education for All and the proposed development policy principles contained in the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP),

Resolved, within the framework of the African Economic Community, to strengthen co-operation between Member States in education and training, and to co-ordinate their policies in that area,

Recommends:

Objectives and priority groups

1. The adoption, as a matter of priority, of the following two overriding objectives:

   broadening of access to the formal, non-formal and informal components of basic education;

   improvement of the quality of basic education, with special emphasis on improving teacher training and learning outcomes;

Basic education must ensure, inter alia greater interaction of learners with their environment and more effective participation in development through the acquisition of knowledge and the development of appropriate skills and attitudes;
2. Assignment of priority to school-age children and to such vulnerable social groups as young children, illiterate girls and women, children in difficult circumstances, disabled persons and refugees;

3. Formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes designed to cater primarily for the different target groups, while continuing to give due attention to other groups;

Global strategies for the year 2000

4. Adoption of a global strategy for the African region, based on an interactive multi-sectoral approach, with the aim of achieving at least the following objectives:

   reducing illiteracy by half compared with its 1990 level by the year 2000 (from 52 to 26 per cent);

   exceeding the regional gross enrolment ratio attained in 1980 in order to reverse the downward trend recorded in the meantime (the ratio decreased from 79 to 72 per cent between 1980 and 1988);

   developing educational facilities to improve the quality of basic education;

5. Adoption of national strategies that differ according to the degree of development of basic education, with a view to achieving the goals of the global strategy:

   countries with a net enrolment ratio of less than 40 per cent would aim at doubling that ratio;

   countries with a net enrolment ratio of between 40 and 49 per cent would aim at a target of 75 per cent;

   countries with a net enrolment ratio of between 50 and 70 per cent would aim at a target of 80 per cent;

   the other countries would aim at universal school enrolment;

   for all countries, the goal of reducing the illiteracy ratio by half by the year 2000 is maintained;

Specific strategies

In order to attain these objectives, recommends:

in respect of national development policies

6. Making due allowance for the population variable in drawing up economic and social policies and in planning development;

7. Ensuring appropriate distribution, redistribution and reallocation of resources for people centred development, giving priority to basic education;
8. Exercising control over material, financial and human resources for endogenous development;

9. Democratizing political life so as to enable the population to take an effective part in decision-making on matters of national and local importance;

10. Spelling out the obligations of the State, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the population with a view to achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 5;

11. Promoting national and community languages for development, unity and liberation;

12. Preserving and enhancing the cultural heritage;

**in respect of educational policies**

13. Improving the planning and management of education systems as well as information systems;

14. Enhancing the status of the teaching profession and the function of educators;

15. Ensuring efficient linkage between the different educational levels and promoting mutual-support between formal, non-formal and informal education;

16. Promoting action-oriented research and innovation in teaching and learning methods with the aim of improving results;

17. Introducing far-reaching reforms of curricula consistent with the objectives laid down in respect of basic education and promoting the use of African languages in education;

18. Promoting structures for designing, preparing, publishing and distributing school textbooks and teaching and learning materials;

19. Developing national programmes and systems for evaluating learning outcomes;

20. Fostering better integration of the school into everyday life;

21. Promoting population education and education for environmental protection;

22. Developing scientific and technological research, especially in higher education,

23. Promoting science and technology teaching and pre- and in-service training in the different types of education, including basic education;

24. Making use of new information and communication technologies in favour of education;

25. Creating centres of excellence in order to ensure that better use is made of African human resources;
in respect of the mobilization of resources

26. Generating awareness in and mobilizing local communities and the different partners engaged in basic education, including the private sector;

27. Promoting mutual assistance, solidarity and a participatory approach to the implementation of basic education projects;

28. Organizing large-scale literacy campaigns in which every literate person instructs somebody who is illiterate;

29. Making allowance for the basic education component in development projects and in the rescheduling of African debt;

30. Broadening the scope of partnership with the aim of diversifying the resources available for funding and implementing basic education projects and programmes;

in respect of subregional and regional co-operation

31. Stepping up the exchange of information and experiences between Member States;

32. Promoting technical co-operation in education between African Member States;

33. Giving effect to the regional integration provisions in respect of the development of human resources set out in the Treaty of the African Economic Community;

Practical measures

34. Preparing and implementing economic and social reforms centred on the human dimension of development;

35. Organizing national consultations at different levels with the aim of spelling out the objectives and strategies laid down for basic education for all and of briefing and alerting the public at large;

36. Preparing and implementing national action plans;

37. Setting up special funds for the development of basic education;

38. Preparing and implementing a regional action plan in support of the national action plans;

39. Setting up multisectoral co-ordinating machinery including, at the national level, the creation and running of national committees on basic education for all, supported at the regional level by an operational coordinating structure;

40. Taking appropriate steps to follow up the decisions and recommendations of the MINEDAF conferences.
No. 2: Long-term regional plan of action for basic education for all

The Conference,

Recalling the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs,

Taking note of the educational conditions that prevailed in the economic context of the 1980s as described in the document Educational Strategies for the 1990s in Africa: Promotion of Literacy Teaching and Basic Education for Development’ (ED-91/MINEDAF/3),

Considering the development goals and strategies laid down for the 1990s in Africa (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.3),


Anxious to halt and reverse the present negative trends in the quantitative and qualitative development of education in Africa,

Aware of the need for regional action based on economies of scale and comparative advantage with a view to optimising available resources, creating an adequate learning environment and reducing dependence on outside assistance,

Aware of the fact that such regional collaboration would be particularly appropriate in the following fields:

the training of planners and managers in order to enhance capabilities for the management and analysis of data on basic education;

the strengthening of capabilities for evaluating the quality of education, particularly through the compilation of data and the analysis of indicators on the quality of basic education;

enhancing capacities for the production of and increasing the availability of teaching and learning materials for basic education, especially in African languages;

the training and further training of teachers to enable them to provide high-quality teaching suited to the needs of different types of learners;

the use of the media to meet basic educational needs, particularly with reference to distance education strategies, which will be the subject of research, exchanges of information, staff training and the production of teaching aids, in accordance with the specific plan of action drawn up by the Arusha seminar held at Arusha (Tanzania, September 1990);

Recommends to the Member States of Africa that they reinforce, in the framework of their national plans of action, the capacities of the individual countries to fulfil the objectives relating to:

the protection and education of young children;
the universalization of primary education;

the promotion of basic education for girls and women;

improving access to basic education for marginal and disadvantaged populations;

the promotion of basic education for young illiterates in the 12 to 17 age-group as well as for adults;

the promotion of participatory approaches to basic education, including the ‘each one teach one’ approach;

improving teaching and learning outcomes for the different target groups identified at the national level;

**Recommends** to UNESCO that it:

- draw up and implement, in collaboration with Member States, bilateral and multilateral institutions, in particular UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank, and all interested partners, a long-term regional plan of action for basic education for all in support of national action plans;

- launch an appeal for international co-operation in support of the regional plan of action;

- address itself to setting up appropriate coordinating machinery at the regional level;

**Recommends** to multilateral and bilateral institutions and to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that they co-ordinate their action aimed at preparing, implementing, following up and evaluating the regional plan of action and contribute to the setting-up of an appropriate cooperation mechanism involving both donors and recipients.

**No. 3: Follow-up to ministerial conferences**

The Conference,

**Having taken note** of the Synthesis of the Evaluation Report on the Follow-up to MINEDAF Conferences and Advisory Bodies in the Field of Education in Africa (BREDA/91/EPVMF.VI/0163),

**Acknowledging** the quality of the results achieved in respect of follow-up, both by Member States and by UNESCO and other partners interested in education in Africa (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.2),

**Considering** the commendable work accomplished by the advisory committees set up after MINEDAF V,

**Conscious** nevertheless of the scale of the tasks still to be addressed in order to undertake systematic follow-up capable of ensuring more coordinated action and of encouraging worthwhile initiatives,
Aware of the economic difficulties confronting Member States, which are aggravated by an unfa-
vourable economic and financial environment,

Trusting, however, in the new world outlook for education for all and particularly in the new awa-
reness of the strategic role played by education in development,

Anxious to enhance the effectiveness of the action undertaken by UNESCO and the Member States
in following up the decisions and recommendations of the MINEDAF conferences,

Recommends to the Director-General of UNESCO that he:

1. Take appropriate steps to ensure better follow-up to MINEDAF conferences;

2. Consider, for that purpose, the possibility of setting up a regional committee to follow up
those conferences, which could replace the existing advisory committees in different special-
ised educational fields in Africa;

3. Enlist the assistance of the existing advisory committees in following up ministerial confe-
rences, pending the establishment of the regional committee, namely the committees on
higher education, literacy and the teaching of science and technology;

4. Involve UNESCO’s regional and subregional offices in the follow-up mechanism for MINE-
DAF conferences and strengthen them for that purpose;

5. Report to the Executive Board at its 140th session in autumn 1992 on the action taken in res-
pect of points 1 to 4 above;

Recommends to the Member States that they set up national follow-up mechanisms in which the
National Commissions for UNESCO would play an active part.

No. 4: Co-operation for the development of education in Africa

The Conference,

Acknowledging the efforts made by Member States to step up regional co-operation despite the seve-
re constraints to which their economies have been subjected during the past decade,

Considering the importance and the nature of the current challenges to be met by Member States in
the field of education, especially as regards basic education for all, development of the teaching of
science and technology, the promotion of national languages, and the development of higher educa-
tion and research and development,

Recognizing the stated intention of Member States and international bodies to assign increasingly
high priority to the development of human resources at all levels,

Observing, however, that basic educational needs are not being properly catered for, chiefly becau-
se of the difficulties entailed in mobilizing and making use of resources and in fulfilling the condi-
tions set in adjustment programmes, which affect the social sector and in particular education,
Considering the favourable role that can be played by national, regional and international co-operation in this regard,

**Recommends** to Member States that they:

1. Promote new and more active partnerships within each Member State, making provision for popular participation, in particular through social mobilisation based, for example, on the mass media;

2. Mobilize national resources through multisectoral and interactive participation by all those involved in basic education, secondary education and higher education alike;

3. Deploy appropriate means for the identification, preparation and evaluation of priority projects in the field of education;

4. Implement special programmes to promote the use of African languages, in particular when designing teaching materials and methods for the development of education;

5. Set up a system for the exchange of information and experiences between Member States, thus stepping up technical co-operation among the African Member States;

6. Enhance existing subregional and regional institutional capacities for the promotion of centres of excellence;

7. Discharge their financial obligations so that the regional and subregional institutions that they have joined become more functional;

8. Assist in implementing the Special Programme for the Improvement of Higher Education in Africa and the Plan of Action drawn up by the Consultation of Experts on Future Trends and Challenges in Higher Education in Africa;

9. Co-ordinate the activities of the international agencies, bilateral institutions and NGOs, in particular in the field of basic education;

**Recommends** to UNESCO that it:

1. Continue and intensify co-operation with Member States, by promoting the formulation, execution and evaluation of educational policies and plans, as well as co-ordination and consultations in that area;

2. Step up support for Member States in its different fields of competence, particularly by implementing a regional plan of action for basic education for all and special programmes for the other levels of education, as well as in science and technology, culture, communication and social sciences, and the promotion of African languages;

3. Develop existing networks, especially the Network of Educational Innovation for Development in Africa (NEIDA);

4. Promote the use of African expertise in the preparation and execution of educational projects and update the existing directories for that purpose;
5. Set up operational machinery for follow-up and co-ordination in the field of basic education;

6. Assist in mobilizing outside resources to enhance the capacity for action of the regional and subregional institutions (for example AALAE, CREA, BASE, ACO, etc.);

7. Assist liberation movements in South Africa in basic education and in training the high level manpower that will be needed in post-apartheid South Africa;

8. Foster closer co-operation with African and international non-governmental organizations with a view to stepping up educational development activities in local communities;

9. Step up the efforts being made under UNESCO’s ‘Priority: Africa’ programme to develop the national capacities of Member States;

10. Strengthen co-operation with OAU and ECA in the development of education and human resources;

Recommends to the international agencies that they:

1. Develop inter-agency co-operation on the lines of the UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and World Bank initiative in organizing the Jomtien World Conference, which represents an important step towards new concerted action to develop human resources;

2. Employ all the means at their disposal to assist Member States in preparing and implementing national action plans for basic education for all;

3. Step up co-operation with a view to raising funds for educational development in Africa, so that the volume of assistance is increased to a level consonant with the objectives laid down.

No. 5: The debt burden, education and development

The Conference,

Noting the adverse effects of the debt burden on African economies, particularly during the past decade,

Aware of the magnitude of the financial resources needed to finance development,

Anxious to reverse the trend towards net capital outflows from Africa,

Emphasizing the need to find solutions to the debt crisis that preserve the continent’s chances of development,

Recommends to the Member States that they:

1. Take suitable steps to reverse the trend towards net capital outflows;
2. Strive to ensure that no more than ten per cent of export revenue is used to service the debt, in accordance with the recommendations of the AAF-SAP (African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation);

3. See to it that educational development projects are taken into account in negotiations on African debt conversion arrangements;

**Recommends** to UNESCO that it:

1. Support Member States’ efforts to reduce the adverse effects of the debt crisis on the social sector, particularly education;

2. Contribute to the strengthening of national capacity for the preparation of educational projects in the framework of African debt conversion arrangements;

**Recommends** to international institutions that they:

1. Help to reverse the trend towards capital outflows, which are an obstacle to the financing of development in Africa;

2. Strive to find solutions to the debt crisis, in particular by taking into account the human and social dimension in alternative strategies.
PART V

The Dakar Declaration

The Sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States, meeting in Dakar from 8 to 11 July 1991 to discuss as its central theme ‘Educational strategies for the 1990s in Africa: Promotion of literacy teaching and basic education for development’, solemnly adopts the following declaration.

Preamble

Thirty years after the first gathering in Addis Ababa, the Conference draws attention to the deterioration in social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions, reflected, inter alia, in the continuing difficulties and the magnitude of the problems besetting the continent.

The Conference is also taking place amid unprecedented social and political upheavals in Africa that are one expression of the striving of the peoples of the continent for democracy and social justice. It is a situation that calls for urgent measures to formulate new development policies and strategies.

In this connection, the Conference supports the approach put forward by the Economic Commission for Africa in the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation, which represents a departure from the traditional adjustment programmes which have by and large contributed to a worsening of the condition of African economies.

In the search for answers to the crisis in education, the Conference voices its satisfaction at the outcome of the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien in March 1990, illustrated mainly by the adoption of the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs.

The Conference also attaches considerable importance to the relevant conclusions of the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity held in Abuja in June 1991, which led to the signing of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community whose purpose is to ensure the successful accomplishment of the continent-wide process of economic integration.

Challenges

Despite the steps that the Member States have taken and the efforts that they have made, the challenges still remaining are considerable if literacy and basic education for development are to be effectively promoted. Although there has been a reduction in the illiteracy rate, the absolute number of illiterates is increasing, especially among women. While two men out of three are now literate, two women out of three are still illiterate. It is estimated that, by the year 2000, there will be 181 million illiterate persons in the Africa region, or some 9 million more than in 1990.

Moreover, the gross primary school enrolment ratio in the region fell by 7 points over the period from 1980 to 1990, indicating a negative trend in enrolment, which is even more marked among girls, particularly in rural areas. In some cases, the number of children attending school is falling, a trend that is also related to a loss of interest in schooling. The failure to match education and training with employment opportunities is becoming critical as a result of the adverse impact of the
policies pursued over the past decade. Youth employment is still a challenge of crucial importance for development.

Over and above the promotion of literacy and basic education, the development of human resources in Africa is a challenge that will have to be addressed as a fundamental prerequisite for development in its economic, social, political, cultural, scientific, technical, environmental and other dimensions.

In addition, the Conference draws special attention to the following challenges:

harnessing science and technology for the development of Africa;

preserving and promoting the African cultural heritage;

harnessing African natural and financial resources for the development of the continent.

Strategies

In view of the challenges identified and the progress made in placing due emphasis on the development of basic education, the Conference:

emphasises the need to evolve new human-centred strategies, taking into account the interaction between the different demographic, socio-cultural, environmental, technological, economic and political factors;

advocates the adoption of a systems approach in formulating development strategies for basic education so that a global, consistent and dynamic procedure may be followed in the analysis, formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes;

sets out the following priority objectives which the strategies should help to achieve:

extending access to basic education, as a matter of priority, for school-age children and such vulnerable social groups as young children, illiterate girls and women, children in difficult circumstances, disabled persons and refugees;

improving the quality of basic education, which should provide African men and women with knowledge, skills and attitudes that are relevant to their environment and meet the needs for genuine development of the society in which they live and of African societies generally.

Decides accordingly to:

strengthen co-operation between national structures within Member States and among Member States themselves for a new and effective partnership in favour of basic education;

Promote the development of human resources at all levels, in particular the training of trainers and specialists through appropriate education and training;
promote science and technology education and research, in particular research and development in such vital areas as agriculture and the local processing of national resources;

promote African languages and their use in education and training.

Commitment and appeal

Mindful of the scale of the challenges facing the continent of Africa, the Conference solemnly reaffirms its determination to continue pursuing the objectives for basic education set out in this declaration, in keeping with the commitments made by the Member States both at the World Conference on Education for All and at the last OAU summit meeting, especially as regards the development of human resources for collective self-sufficiency and African economic integration.

The Conference appeals to the Member States to:

prepare and implement national plans of action for basic education for all that are designed to achieve national objectives established through a process of consultation with local and external partners; these plans should incorporate and supplement the eradication of illiteracy in a more comprehensive and multisectoral approach;

build up an effective partnership for basic education by adopting an interactive multisectoral approach conducive to involvement of the different sectors and mutual support among them and ensuring economies of scale;

contribute to the strengthening of subregional, regional and South-South co-operation, particularly as regards information systems for educational management, the exchange of experiences and technical co-operation.

The Conference appeals to UNESCO to:

prepare and implement, in co-operation with Member States, fellow agencies in the United Nations system, bilateral and multilateral co-operation agencies, non-governmental organisations and other partners, a long-term regional plan of action for basic education for all, designed to provide diversified support for national plans of action and to mobilise additional resources for the achievement of national objectives;

establish a regional co-ordinating mechanism to enhance the efficiency of technical support and external resource mobilisations;

increase its support for subregional and regional co-operation, in particular by improving co-operation mechanisms and stepping up its assistance to the Member States of the region.

The Conference appeals to the international community to take effective and efficient action to assist in achieving the goals and objectives of education in Africa, particularly those of basic education for all, in accordance with the different commitments already made and in the spirit of this declaration.
ANNEXES

I. Agenda

II. Addresses delivered at the opening meeting and at the beginning of the first plenary meeting

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ANNEX I

Agenda

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Election of the Chairman
3. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure
4. Election of members of the Bureau
5. Adoption of the agenda
6. Organization of the work of the Conference
7. Submission of the report of the meeting of experts
8. Evaluation of educational developments in Africa during the 1980s and implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V
9. Priorities for social and economic development in Africa in the 1990s, having regard in particular to the promotion of literacy and basic education
10. Co-operation in educational development in Africa: guidelines and priorities for subregional, regional and international co-operation, with special attention to the follow-up to the ministerial conferences and to the existing advisory committees in the field of education in Africa
11. Adoption of the report and recommendations of the Conference
12. Closure of the Conference
ANNEX II

Addresses delivered at the opening meeting and at the beginning of the first plenary meeting

Address by Mr Federico Mayor,
Director-General of UNESCO

Address by H.E. Mr Habib Thiam,
Prime Minister of Senegal

Address by H.E. Mr Andre Sonko,
Minister of Education of Senegal
Address by Mr Federico Mayor,  
Director-General of UNESCO

‘As the structures inherited from the past crumble into dust throughout the world, we are witnessing a moral and spiritual rebirth of peoples everywhere: a new African moral awareness and a new national temperament are evolving before our very eyes, and unless the structures put up resistance (and one may doubt their ability to do so), this phenomenon of spiritual transformation of the peoples of the world is destined to gain ground.’

This penetrating vision of the shape of things to come is taken from a book by Sheikh Anta Diop, a great voice of African culture that fell silent some three years ago but remains with us as a trusted guide. For we sorely need the example he has bequeathed to us and because, as another Diop - Birago - has reminded us, ‘the dead are not dead’.

I have made a point of quoting their words by way of a preface to my own because they seem to epitomize - along with others, of course - the wisdom, sensibility, talent and art of Africa. Now more than ever, Africa needs to have confidence in itself and in its ability to plan and control its future. You, as Ministers of Education, have the destiny of Africa in your hands, since it is you who must set about awakening the tremendous intellectual potential that represents its greatest treasure. And so this Conference - which opens at a time ripe with expectation because the diagnosis has been made and needs only to be translated into action - can, and must, through its commitments, stand out as a historical turning-point.

Mr Prime Minister,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, 

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you here for the opening of this sixth Regional Conference. Allow me first of all to express my gratitude to the Senegalese authorities, and especially to the Head of State Mr Abdou Diouf, for their generous invitation to hold these meetings here in Dakar and for the excellent working conditions that they have provided for us.

The presence at this meeting of such a large number of high-level participants is gratifying both for UNESCO and for the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, which assisted us in preparing it. I should like to welcome the delegates of Member States, who are quite plainly showing their interest in what is in effect their own Conference on educational policies and co-operation in Africa. I should also like to greet the other participants present here as observers from non-Member States, national liberation movements, organisations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and foundations. Their presence is proof of their commitment to the cause of Africa and their faith in education as a decisive factor in ensuring a successful outcome for the far-reaching social, economic and political changes taking place in the continent.

Mr Prime Minister,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Conference is opening in an African context that is particularly complex and could be said to display two contrasting tendencies. On the one hand, we have the hopes aroused, for example, by the last OAU summit meeting held in Abuja, and especially the setting up of the African Economic Community; the resolution on the economic situation in Africa adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-fifth session; the results achieved by the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held at UNESCO last September; the focusing of multilateral efforts on Africa; the measures adopted, in some instances, to deal with the foreign debt; and the recognition of the overwhelming importance of securing a fair price for primary commodities. On the other, there are feelings of helplessness in the face of the persistent economic crisis which, over a period of ten years, has slowed down the pace of growth or even stifled it altogether, pointing up the conceptual and practical shortcomings of development strategies. In social terms, such indicators as access to clean drinking-water, the availability of foodstuffs and the provision of primary health care give some idea of the scant progress that has been made after three decades of international and national development strategies.

The contrasts that are a general feature of present-day Africa are likewise discernible in the educational situation. As far as illiteracy is concerned, the ratio fell from 66 per cent in 1980 to 52 per cent in 1990. That is a positive development. However, one disquieting aspect is the fact that three out of five women (against four out of five in 1980) and two out of five men (compared with one out of two in 1980) are still illiterate. Hence, although battles have indeed been won, the war the only war for which we have to gird ourselves - is still not over. However, a developed society in which the bulk of the population, or a significant minority, still cannot read or write is unthinkable. And how can any society claim to be on the road to development when half its members - the female half on which its very future depends - is left out of the running?

With regard to primary education, it is gratifying to note that the gross enrolment ratio has increased in 18 African countries. However, the fact that the situation in the other countries is marking time or deteriorating gives grounds for concern. The gross enrolment ratio for Africa as a whole fell, as a result, from 79 to 72 per cent over the decade.

Other signs are indicative of problems of a different nature. For example, during the 1980s, the amounts spent per pupil in the primary education system in sub-Saharan Africa fell by half. The effects that these cutbacks have had on teaching and learning conditions, in other words on the quality of education, can be readily imagined. Too many pupils are going through school without a single textbook or other teaching aid. Little has been done to renew teaching content in an endeavour to tailor it to new forms of knowledge and to the cultural and economic features of local communities.

Yet the future darkens a shade whenever a child is deprived of schooling or drops out too soon without having attained the necessary degree of proficiency in reading, writing, oral expression, arithmetic and the ability to solve the practical problems of everyday life. Whether a country has already achieved universal enrolment at the primary level or cannot aspire to do so by the year 2000 if all it has to count on are its own resources, basic education must rank very high in its order of priorities.
But a linear and one-dimensional approach should be avoided, since development comes about through a complex combination of factors, with education playing several different roles simultaneously for the individual and the community alike. The ideal situation would be one of dynamic equilibrium involving a gradual widening of access to basic education as a precondition for survival, dissemination of the knowledge and know-how that are vitally necessary for a steady improvement in physical and other living conditions and for inculcating attitudes of tolerance and understanding, and promotion of intellectual, scientific, technical and cultural creativity, without which no society can either renew itself or fulfil its potential. An approach such as this ensures that each level and type of education and each discipline occupies its proper place within the whole. In this context, the allocation of resources, subject to existing constraints, becomes an exercise in broadening the scope for flexibility while ensuring greater equity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In considering how to proceed from here, we should first note the assets that Africa can call on in the task ahead: the physical and institutional infrastructures built over the past years, the growing capacities in science and technology, and - most important - the vast human resources of this continent. These constitute a potential that can be mobilised for further development if certain conditions are met.

In this respect, it is important to note that the expansion of primary schooling has enabled many African countries to move closer to providing equal access for girls and boys. For the region as a whole, the proportion of girls enrolled in primary school rose from half in 1975 to two thirds at present. With more girls completing primary school, their access to higher levels has improved as well. Some 40 per cent of secondary pupils are girls, against 33 per cent in 1975; and in higher education, girls constitute one third of the student body, up from one quarter in 1975. This is a very real advance on which we may build for the future.

However, as noted earlier, the quantitative expansion of education halted or declined in many African countries during the 1980s and little progress was made on qualitative improvements. We must now capitalize on the impetus for change provided by the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990. That unique Conference, which many of you attended, succeeded in putting basic education on the world’s agenda for the 1990s. The World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, the two texts adopted unanimously in Jomtien, have served as an inspiration and guide for countries around the world in reviewing their educational situation and in designing their strategies and action plans for developing basic education services according to the ‘expanded vision’of Jomtien. UNESCO has co-operated with many of the countries represented here in such national follow-up activities, often together with our principal Jomtien partners: UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank.

One recent activity in line with the Jomtien Declaration merits special mention here. I refer to the United Nations Conference, held at UNESCO Headquarters last month, on the educational needs of the victims of apartheid in South Africa. ‘Education for all’ was also the main theme of that conference, and you will find a copy of the ‘Paris Declaration’ it adopted in your set of documents.

During this week you will be discussing many aspects of the development of basic education, including literacy action. Of course you will need to take into account the proper articulation of basic education with the other levels and types of education, and also its contribution
to the cultural, social and economic development of society. In this connection, I wish to stress the need for fresh thinking and experimentation to find more effective basic education strategies to bring people of all ages to a higher cultural level and prepare them for productive work. Further progress in democratising education and enhancing learning will depend to a large extent on the motivation of learners, whether children or adults, as they see for themselves the social and economic utility of the opportunities available to them for education and training.

In the framework of UNESCO’s ‘Priority: Africa’ programme, we are exploring together with African Member States the use of a number of promising technologies and approaches. A seminar on distance education (held at Arusha in September 1990) and another on the use of computers in education (held at Lome in December 1990) aimed to outline a plan for regional cooperation in these two fields for the renewal of education systems in the spirit of ‘education for all’. The obstacles to girls’ access to primary schooling is another area of concern within this programme. At present, a dozen case-studies have been commissioned from African researchers in preparation for a pan-African seminar on the subject, tentatively scheduled for January 1992. Other activities are planned in the field of higher education, which has a major role to play in improving the entire education system in each country, including literacy programmes. Next November a seminar on management in higher education will bring together rectors, vice-chancellors and presidents of African universities - an event that can give rise to considerable momentum, leading to the strengthening of their role, not only in the academic and scientific fields, but also in the progress and recovery of the continent as a whole.

In this connection, those of you who attended the Jomtien Conference will recall the important amendment incorporated into the final text of the World Declaration on Education for All, Article 8, paragraph 2, of which reads:

‘Societies should also ensure 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’.

Needless to say, very much remains to be done in this regard. However, as shown by the inventory of African universities and research centres published by UNESCO-ROSTA in May this year, much has already been done and full utilization of the existing potential is an indispensable stage in a wise policy.

Increased co-operation between institutions of higher education within Africa, and between them and similar institutions in other regions, can provide significant benefits for all participating institutions and their respective societies. UNESCO’s new programme known by the acronym ‘UNITWIN’ (university twinning) aims to promote such linkages, so-called twinning arrangements, between universities in developing and industrialised countries; to establish cooperation networks; and to create centres for special studies and advanced research as well as mechanisms for the rapid transfer of scientific knowledge and technology. The latter will be developed around a system of UNESCO chairs, with the host institution’s commitments matched by extra-budgetary funding. A number of these UNESCO chairs have already been established including one at Kenyatta University. Others in Africa (in Zimbabwe and in Equatorial Guinea) are under consideration.

Agreements with the productive sector (both industries and services) are essential for the use of modern facilities and for diversification and competition as well.
I could go on mentioning various other UNESCO regional programmes and networks that are at your disposal for co-operation in basic education. As time presses, I shall confine myself to reminding you that the UNESCO offices in Africa are available to provide all necessary assistance in this regard and to underline that the Organization’s policy of decentralising its programme should enable you in the future to participate more directly in designing and implementing UNESCO’s activities in the region.

As you well know, I have suggested in the programme and budget proposal for the next biennium that all activities have three main targets: women, LDCs and Africa. Africa as a priority will, I am sure, be fully taken care of in the framework of the ‘Priority: Africa’ project that was approved by the General Conference in November 1989.

Mr Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like now to refer to Recommendation No. 2 of the Harare Conference in 1982 concerning the eradication of illiteracy in Africa. That comprehensive recommendation spelled out your aims and the strategies and means for achieving them; it also called on UNESCO to appeal for international co-operation and solidarity in support of the efforts of African Member States and to study the possibility of launching a regional programme to promote literacy. Two years later the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa was launched, and certain documents distributed here give details of the number, magnitude and impact of the activities undertaken since then.

For my part, I wish to observe that it is of little use to organise regional activities intended to have a multiplier effect if, at country level, no major literacy campaign or programmes can be undertaken for lack of resources. Furthermore, improvements in methods for integrated planning are of little benefit if national and external resources allocated to the sectors concerned remain stationary or decline. This is to say that although the aims and principles of the Regional Programme remain valid to this day, they are likely to remain a dead letter unless conditions at country level and the commitment of the international community change for the better.

The time and the place of this Conference seem particularly appropriate for me to renew the appeal I made to the international community at the forty-second session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva last September. I stressed then that sub-Saharan Africa is in a situation of emergency as regards education. Multilateral and bilateral support can and must help each country in the region, but support is also needed for co-operation among African countries. Africa’s partners should work with you to promote and facilitate the intra-African exchange of ideas, experience and expertise, as well as joint activities to share resources and exploit economies of scale, such as in the production of teaching materials. In respect to literacy action, the Regional Programme provides a broad framework for such intra-African co-operation but remains open to external partners as well.

UNESCO has also helped establish regional structures for co-operation in science and technology, in culture and in communications, which could be utilized also to strengthen national capacities to provide basic education to all population groups. Although the school will certainly remain the principal delivery system for basic education, we know that it alone cannot do the entire job, particularly in the present economic situation. We must seek to develop complementary and alternative channels that can enable countries to make a ‘qualitative leap’ forward in meeting the basic learning needs of their people.
While co-operation between countries is important - even essential - in this effort, the \textbf{Framework for Action adopted} at Jomtien stresses the need for each country to examine periodically its own educational situation in the light of its particular culture and development goals. National priorities may need to be reordered from time to time - particularly to release ‘peace dividends’, which must not be expected to be provided only by the industrialised countries. Political will in favour of education for all may need to be reinforced. Security can at present be assured through innovative formulas at the regional level. Investments in education and science could therefore be substantially increased. The result would be an increase in knowledge, the real basis of all development and strength. UNESCO is ready to provide the ministers with all the assistance required to formulate strategies, prepare reforms and elaborate and/or evaluate projects in its fields of competence. The ministers must recall that the Organisation is at their service.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to conclude this presentation by addressing myself, through you as the people primarily responsible for education, to the entire teaching community in Africa. I particularly wish to pay solemn tribute to each and every one of its members, whatever the capacity in which he or she may be working. I am fully aware of the dedication displayed by all those - be they primary- or secondary-school teachers, university lecturers, administrators or entrusted with some other function - whose task it is to prepare young people in Africa to take on the responsibilities awaiting them. As well as conveying to them my gratitude and encouragement, I should also like to tell them that UNESCO is not some remote entity where people spend their time shuffling papers or where decisions are taken by faceless authorities. UNESCO derives its identity from you and its Headquarters is situated wherever there is a schoolchild, a classroom, a school, a faculty or some other similar institution. It is from you that UNESCO draws its strength and the reason for its existence. Lastly, I should like to add that UNESCO has to make its presence felt not only in ministries of education, science and culture, but also in ministries of finance, where the real priorities are determined. Could there be any higher priority for Africa than that of forging a future worthy of the continent?
Address by H.E. Mr Habib Thiam,
Prime Minister of Senegal

Honourable Ministers,
Mr Director-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Head of State, President Abdou Diouf, and the Government and people of Senegal, I should like to add my voice to those of the eminent personalities who have already welcomed you to our country where, as you know, you can always feel at home. I should also like to congratulate the Director-General of UNESCO, his assistants and all the experts involved on the welcome initiative of holding this Regional Conference on so down-to-earth and thought-provoking a subject as educational co-operation and policies in Africa. My country is particularly happy to be hosting this important meeting.

To go straight to the heart of the matter, allow me first of all to remind you briefly of how my country came to be associated with UNESCO. For those of us in Senegal, this most rewarding association is a special source of pride.

The part which the Senegalese and Senegal have played in the life of UNESCO goes back to the very beginning of the Organization.

From the time it gained its independence, Senegal became a fully fledged Member State of UNESCO, as well as of the United Nations and the other Specialized Agencies in the same family. From a very early stage, a wide variety of Senegalese public figures, senior officials, performing artists and politicians became involved in the intellectual and operational activities of UNESCO both in Africa and in the rest of the world. Indeed, one of the most outstanding and striking instances of Senegalese participation in UNESCO’s work was that furnished by our compatriot Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow who, with a passionately held humanist conviction, served as Director-General from 1974 to 1987, at a historic time of international co-operation within UNESCO.

Pursuing as he did the work of his predecessors, while imparting to it the added depth and substance of African values, the signal contribution he made in the particularly difficult circumstances of the 1980s was one whose far-reaching impact and quality was unanimously acknowledged in the tribute that the General Conference paid him on 4 November 1987.

Senegal’s attachment to UNESCO’s principles and ideals and its commitment to contributing to the development of the Organization’s action, particularly in Africa, were to find further meaningful illustration in the presence, here in Dakar, of UNESCO’s Regional Office. Over the years and especially in the 1980s, this office, which was opened in 1970, saw its responsibilities grow and broaden in scope until they covered all areas of the Organization’s competence in Africa. Over and above the specific tasks assigned to it, it was quick to assume the full role which Mr Rend Maheu, the then UNESCO Director-General, wished to confer on it, when he said in his address opening the office on 11 March 1970 that it had been ‘set up to provide a means ofconcerting efforts, a meeting-place, and a forum for the continuing exchange of ideas’.

However, Senegal’s interest was by no means confined to the activities of the Regional Office alone. Our country has always done its utmost to play an active part in the main meetings organized by UNESCO in Africa, such as the conferences of ministers.
After having hosted the first Regional Conference of African Ministers Responsible for the Application of Science and Technology to Development (CASTAFRICA I), Senegal now takes pride in hosting the sixth Conference of African Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning (MINEDAF VI).

Senegal considers that UNESCO has made a significant contribution to the development of education in Africa through the series of MINEDAF Conferences, which started in Addis Ababa in 1961 and the last of which was held in Harare 1982. The continent has, in fact, drawn much of its inspiration from the conclusions of these conferences. Depending on the specific context in which they took place, each of them represented an important stage in common thinking, the exchange of experiences and ideas and the joint definition of priorities.

It is true that each of these conferences took place against a political, economic and social background marked by both regional and international differences. However, in view of the prospects which they opened up, the priorities identified always reflected the constant concern of African governments to ensure that the development of education systems is linked to the economic, social and cultural policies that they adopt for the advancement of their societies.

It will be remembered what the circumstances were at the time of the Harare Conference in 1982. From the political standpoint, that Conference took place in a front-line State which had paid dearly to win its independence after engaging for many years in a struggle for national liberation. Yet, although Zimbabwe was free at last, there was still another country in that part of Africa Namibia - that was continuing to suffer from colonialism. From the economic standpoint, it was the first time in the series of MINEDAF conferences that the ministers responsible for economic planning were associated with the conference of ministers on educational policies and co-operation in Africa. MINEDAF V took place scarcely two years after OAU’s adoption of the ‘Lagos Plan of t Action’ in 1980.

The implications of these events and the prospects they opened up for the development of education - ‘a prerequisite for the fulfilment of individual potential and for the progress of society’ are reflected in the Harare Declaration. The main provisions of that Declaration aim at goals whose achievement should prepare African societies for life in the twenty-first century, such as the eradication of illiteracy, the development and renewal of science and technology teaching, and the modernization of higher education.

Nine years have gone by since then and the MINEDAF VI Conference here in Dakar is taking place in circumstances that have greatly changed. In regional terms, the political situation is marked by the disappearance of the last colony in Africa, with the accession of Namibia to independence. However, apartheid, whose institutional underpinnings have just been abolished, is an issue that is still very much alive in South Africa. From the economic standpoint, the continent has been for some time in a state of crisis, in spite of the efforts of the African countries and the support of the international community as announced at the extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly held in June 1986, a session requested by OAU on the occasion of that Organization’s Summit Conference of Heads of State and government charred by the Head of State of Senegal, Abdou Diouf.

Structural adjustment policies, which are the product of that critical economic situation, have invariably generated further pressures in the social climate, where the problems of young people and employment have to be tackled energetically as a matter of urgency if the future is not to prove even more bitter than the present. Indeed, the balanced modern development of African
societies will come increasingly to depend on the quality that their human resources succeed in acquiring through education and training, in particular as a result of the technical innovations introduced through the spread of new forms of knowledge and know-how. On the international scene, the United Nations system, of which UNESCO forms an integral part, has for several years now been constantly having to cope with the many crucial challenges that humanity is facing. Regardless of whether economics, science and technology, the environment, health or education is involved, the fundamental issue, to my mind, is that of building up the skills and abilities that individuals need to respond, by themselves or in groups, to the many and varied challenges that socioeconomic and ecological transformations and other changes pose for their lives and often their survival. At the end of this entire process, there obviously lies the supreme and ultimate value represented by humankind and the human quest for peace and happiness.

It is in the light of these reminders of the past and bearing in mind the circumstances now facing us that I should like to share with you a few ideas on some of the main themes of this Regional Conference on educational policies and co-operation in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Notwithstanding the most praiseworthy efforts made by its peoples and the progress so patently achieved, our continent of Africa is, in all walks of life, continuing to suffer to a significant degree from serious shortcomings due to widespread illiteracy, low levels of technological knowledge and difficulty in ensuring the rational mobilisation of all its potential in the bid to emerge from a state of underdevelopment.

It has to be acknowledged that Africa needs, more than ever before, to embark on the peaceful path towards a genuine cultural revolution, so that it can explore, in a critical frame of mind, all the wealth of our cultural heritage, identify those of its values that are positive and hold out promise for the future, and lay our education systems on foundations that are a source of inspiration and vitality.

This will call for sustained efforts, which may not necessarily be any greater than those already deployed, but will certainly be better suited to the purpose and more relevant. Domestic and external resources will be necessary. In this connection, we can only applaud the findings and the Declaration that marked the proceedings of the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien in 1990. Allow me to quote two significant passages from that fundamental document.

In the first place, it solemnly declares that:

‘Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs’.

The Declaration then goes on to say:

‘These needs comprise both essential learning tools (...) and the basic learning content (...) required by human beings to be able to survive ... to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning’.

By proclaiming that everybody should be provided with a basic education, the Jomtien Declaration takes the form of a renewed and carefully thought out commitment set in a worldwide context and perspective. As far as Africa is concerned, this commitment can be said to be a broader
and more emphatic follow-up to that made by the Conference of Ministers in Addis Ababa in 1961 and reiterated in Harare in 1982, whose aim was:

‘to enable all African children and adults of both sexes to exercise fully their right to education, a prerequisite for the fulfilment of individual potential and for the progress of society’.

My purpose here is not to make a new plea for education. The cause has long since won support. However, as time goes by, it is taking on an urgency and gravity that are increasingly vital and must eventually come to be expressed in terms of the overwhelming dilemma represented by the need to ‘Educate or Perish’, as Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo so eloquently put it in the title of a collective work published last year.

The tasks that African governments have to perform in respect of basic education and the eradication of illiteracy are still as demanding and urgent as they were 30 years ago: they entail ensuring universal access to education and giving it fresh content. In pursuing their efforts to discharge their obligations, African governments have to mobilize all their domestic resources and rely primarily on themselves. But they also have to be able to count on substantial support from the international community.

In this connection, we wish to voice our satisfaction at the announcements made at Jomtien by the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO, to the effect that they are stepping up the resources allocated to their programmes for developing basic education.

With regard to this point, I should like to suggest that, in view of the critical situation of education in Africa, these four major institutions consider the possibility of helping the African States, both individually and collectively, by adopting special supporting measures enabling emergency status to be conferred on the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy which UNESCO launched in Africa in 1984 and whose lines of emphasis, goals, principles, modalities and framework are consistent with the provisions of the World Plan of Action for Education for All.

Another fundamental feature of the development of education in Africa to which your Conference will have to give thought concerns the content of education in the light of the outlook for Africa in the twenty-first century.

I personally consider that it is necessary, indeed imperative, to modernise educational content. Thirty years after independence, thinking on how to renew educational content should no longer be guided solely by the concern - which was perfectly legitimate at the outset - to ‘decolonize’ people’s minds and ‘rehabilitate’ African cultures. As well as seeking to establish solid foundations, the responsible authorities must ensure that modern-day African education has an effective impact. The modern world is one predicated on the quality of life and on a command of science and technology, but also on a worldwide climate of security and on productivity that is as much intellectual and spiritual as it is material. It is by being properly aware of these requirements that African education could embark, with very real prospects of success, on the path that will prepare the continent for its entry into the twenty-first century. One of the key features of such modern educational content is science and its associated know-how.

This goes to show the importance that has to be attached to science and technology teaching in the education systems of the African countries. Indeed, these systems have a fundamental role to play in creating and consolidating the basic conditions in which Africans can enhance their skills
and their scientific and technical know-how. It is true that a great deal has already been done in that respect by governments, often with the assistance of bilateral and international co-operation. UNESCO’s action in this connection, alongside that of other institutions such as the ‘Agence de cooperation culturelle et technique’ and the Commonwealth Secretariat, has been greatly appreciated.

However, I feel that further efforts are essential if the African countries are to be able to lay down and implement more effective specific strategies for renewing science and technology teaching. I also feel that, through the framework and facilities for co-operation that UNESCO could provide, it should be possible for the African countries to develop curricula, equipment and methods whose application would lead, after a specific period, to the complete renewal and modernisation of the scientific and technical content of primary and secondary education.

To my mind, the importance attached to such a course is, in fact, consistent with the concern displayed by those responsible for African educational policies to ensure that the minds of African children are made responsive to scientific rationality and creativity.

I mentioned earlier, when I spoke of the conferences of ministers organised by UNESCO in collaboration with OAU and ECA, that they have always taken account of the concern of African governments to integrate the development of education into their overall economic and social development policies.

However, the relationship that education bears to society, the economy and culture is very complex and cannot be dealt with in a straightforward and unthinking manner. It is not surprising, therefore, that such integration is still by no means complete in operational terms. In particular, there is a dangerous rift in many countries between the education system and the economic system, above all at the higher education level, where its effects are most perceptible. It is at this level that the most significant challenges are taking shape and it is likewise at this level that it is important to evolve new approaches that are more flexible and better suited to the pace and diversity of the pressures exerted by the modern world.

The importance of the role played by higher education in the scientific, intellectual and cultural advancement of societies is illustrated by the performance of the industrialised countries. In Africa too, higher education, and university education in particular, has to be made capable of discharging its tasks of teaching, research and training as efficiently as possible in order to contribute to the advancement of societies. In this connection, co-operation between universities has to become a constructive practice, both regionally and internationally. It is a practice in which Senegal is engaged and intends to continue developing.

Through twinning arrangements or other mechanisms, such as those introduced in the French-speaking community, the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar and, for the past year, the University of Saint-Louis have joined with a large number of universities all over the world in adopting this open-door approach, which lays the basis for exchanges and technology transfers and, in some instances, for the pooling of available resources.

The African countries have to work together in developing and taking advantage of the ideas and potential existing in this field, by endeavouring to channel them towards objectives that are consonant with their urgent development priorities, the needs of their young people and the expectations of their populations.
If properly conducted, educational policies and co-operation will certainly represent one of the most powerful agents for bringing about African integration, which is our most cherished hope and our most direct route out of the agony of underdevelopment and into an age of genuine recovery and progress. At the ECOWAS Summit Meeting recently held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 4 July 1991, President Abdou Diouf put forward practical proposals calculated to step up the pace of our advance towards African integration.

There can be no doubt that your important deliberations will generate proposals and strategies that will enable UNESCO and the Member States to consolidate their gains and make progress towards finding effective solutions. Wishing you success commensurate with your legitimate ambitions, I hereby declare open this Sixth Conference of African Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning.
Address by H.E. Mr Andre Sonko,
Minister of Education of Senegal

Mr Prime Minister,
Mr Director-General of UNESCO,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with a sense of real pleasure and pride that Senegal is hosting this most distinguished Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States. Allow me to welcome you to my country. All I want to say is that you are at home here in Senegal. Our meeting, which bears out the conviction shared by our countries that there exists a close relationship between educational planning and economic development, represents a prime opportunity for giving considered thought to concerted strategies for contending with the all-pervading and worsening crisis that is afflicting African societies. The fact is that education is still the most important and systematic vehicle for enhancing the quality of human resources, the mainspring and end-purpose of the global development of our societies. The three themes for discussion on your agenda, namely:

the evaluation of educational development in Africa during the 1980s,
priorities for social and economic development in Africa in the 1990s,
co-operation in educational development in Africa,

have therefore been selected with a view to carrying out an in-depth analysis of the severe demographic, financial, socio-political, cultural and environmental constraints that are holding back the development of our education systems and formulating effective, customised, integrated and concerted policies to deal with them. I hope that the work we are about to begin on the basis of the draft recommendations prepared by our experts will make it easier to identify realistic priorities for economic and social development and then, with those priorities in mind, to lay down appropriate educational goals and strategies for the 1990s.

If they are realistic, these goals and strategies may enable us to remedy the glaring disparities between the different sectors of our population in terms of enjoyment of the right to education and ensure that illiteracy is banished from our continent forever and with it the severe individual and social deprivation that exists in our countries.

It should also be stressed that the current economic situation is making it increasingly urgent for our countries to co-operate, since our education systems are having to cope with the same severe crisis, although it may differ in degree from one country to another. It is therefore advisable in the interests of our continent for us to work together in seeking appropriate solutions. The impetus needed to come to terms with the demographic and financial constraints that are currently the major inhibiting factors can certainly be generated by comparing the experience gained by our different countries and the interactions between our different systems and between our experts and researchers. It is only then that we shall be able to take steps towards the early rehabilitation of our education systems, a prerequisite for social and economic progress that is both equitable and long lasting.
What my country is expecting from this Conference is the definition of a framework for operational action and strategies designed to strengthen regional and interregional co-operation with a view to enriching the experience we have gained in solving the educational problems that are frustrating the development of human resources.

In the same context of solidarity, it is a pleasure for me to remind you of the importance of our proceedings and the favourable auspices under which they are taking place. The outcome of the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990 on the initiative of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank, was the firmer and more active commitment made by the international community to help the education systems of the developing countries, in an endeavour to improve their performance significantly in both quantitative and qualitative terms. We have to make imaginative use of this fresh opportunity we are being offered by setting higher standards for the organisation of our education systems. Regional and interregional co-operation will only be meaningful if action in individual countries is well thought out and organised and properly implemented.

I am convinced that, following the important preparatory work done by our experts, this sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in the African Member States will be a resounding success and will be carried along by the same momentum as those held in Addis Ababa in 1961, Abidjan in 1964, Nairobi in 1968, Lagos in 1976 and Harare in 1982. The peoples of Africa are expecting a great deal from our meeting. Once again, welcome to this land of African ‘teranga’.
ANNEX III

Address delivered at the closing meeting
Address by Mr Colin M. Power,
Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO

Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,
Observers from international governmental and
non-governmental organisations,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now that we have reached the last session of MINEDAF VI, we naturally ask ourselves what returns it will give.

MINEDAF V planted the idea of a regional programme for literacy. The Conference documents and your reports reveal that this programme is playing its part in helping Member States to reduce illiteracy rates, despite the lack of resources. International Literacy Year (ILY) played its part in drawing the attention of the world community to the task which lies ahead. Jomtien expanded the vision to encompass basic education for all, introducing the quality dimension and a framework for action.

It has been a source of great personal satisfaction to see my own efforts, and those of UNESCO as a whole, begin to take shape in regional actions. The thinking of Jomtien encompasses the broad view of basic education and its declaration and framework give expression to the concerns and priorities expressed by our Member States in regional preparatory meetings and at Jomtien itself. MINEDAF VI completes the cycle of regional consultation; forging international solidarity; and moving on to regional and national action.

I can assure you that the Director-General will, in turn, be challenged by the responses which you have made to the challenges which he posed on Monday morning.

MINEDAF VI has been a learning experience in itself. We have all learned of national innovations and new policy directions generated in the face of economic crisis. The background documents are a particularly rich source of specific information, and I must here pay tribute to our partners, ECA and OAU. The ECA paper provides an in-depth account of the evolution of the socioeconomic conditions of Africa, and the most recent OAU summit also has helped shape our thinking.

We leave this Conference with five challenging recommendations conceived within a framework of realism: realism in establishing targets; realism in formulating strategies, and fully conscious of the fact that Africa’s future and South-South co-operation are intimately intertwined. Thus the Director-General and the General Conference of UNESCO are in a good position to act promptly on your recommendations. The Director-General will give wide publicity to the Declaration and the supporting documents. He will also strive to sensitise the international community to the deep concerns about the human costs in Africa of the reductions in public expenditure on education.

Underlying the five recommendations put forward to your governments and to the Director-General are five themes:

1. pioneering affordable alternatives;
2. developing an African education concept;
3. action-oriented approaches;
4. ensuring more and better co-operation and co-ordination; and
5. a down to each, people-to-people orientation.

I. Pioneering affordable alternatives

The discussions which we have had here together, along with our continuing analysis of educational developments, point to the need to develop and promote affordable alternatives. Indeed, this is well reflected in your comprehensive Recommendation No. 1 on educational strategies for the 1990s in Africa.

Many of the economic development approaches used in the past have been costly in economic terms when applied. Further, when, in the face of economic retrenchment, they were cut back, they have been costly in terms of the human suffering. Unfulfilled expectations and reduced availability of funds have been a bitter lesson.

In addition, education systems/activities which promote the development of national capacities for self-reliance are contributing in no small measure to affordable alternatives. In stressing the need to have a proper perspective about assistance, one of your ministers put forward an important principle. This is that external support should be used to supplement African efforts and not the other way round.

The locus for the generation of affordable alternatives rests on the interplay between reflection and action. This underlines the need for continuing research on viable alternatives and the identification of actual experiences which work. Examples of affordable alternatives abound and our commitment along with you is to find and popularize these. Their origins can be found in diverse places. In the lead-up to Jomtien, national and regional examples were presented in the subregional preparatory meetings. Some come from country initiatives, some from subregional action and some others from outside the region. Africa was a cornucopia of examples.

UNESCO is proud of its own efforts in this respect. They cover a wide range of topics and are spread over many of the countries of the region. Without attempting to be exhaustive, let me identify a few of them:

- the preparation of inexpensive teaching materials (literacy caravan in Senegal);
- the development of low-cost science equipment (Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe);
- self-help school construction (Senegal, Sudan, Guinea, Somalia);
- non-formal education packages (Tanzania);
- distance education as described at the Arusha Conference;
- the integration of the handicapped into the educational mainstream.
II. **Towards African alternatives in education**

These affordable alternatives are, in effect, concrete evidence of the development of distinctively African alternatives in education. The strategies identified in Recommendation No.1 will, when they are fully implemented, carry this development a step further.

From the continuing research by African scholars, better understanding of Africa’s resources and its problems is now available. The very significant examples of affordable alternatives to which I have referred, have always taken the research and experience of Africans into consideration. These are a reinforcement of the Organization’s view that a profound understanding of the cultural context of a society is a *sine qua non* for the design of an effective educational system.

This Conference has reaffirmed the importance of the use of African languages in literacy and development drives. Participants endorsed the full breadth of the concept as is applied by UNESCO. That approach recognizes the value of all languages and does not deal with giving predominance to any one for the purpose of achieving initial learning.

The development of an African alternative to education must take fully into account who are to be educated. The majority of Africans live in rural settings and, increasingly, in marginal urban areas. We know that when education is tailor-made for middle class urban life, it leads to much drop-out and high wastage rates among children in rural areas and in marginal urban districts. Realism in what we develop is called for.

Central to any new programmes which are being created in basic education, must be issues dealing with health and population. This concentration, together with the emphasis which we are placing on the education of women, can undoubtedly produce great developmental gains. We are all aware that lower infant mortality, lower birth rates, higher school enrolment, better performance of children in school and greater productivity in the work place are positively correlated with the educational level of women. The specific targets which Recommendation No. 1 sets out in this respect are realistic and will be an important contribution to development.

All aspects of the development of African alternatives are important. Yet, because of its importance in today’s world, a special place has to be assigned to science and technology. Its central spot in many of the contributions of ministers, is a clear witness to this. The introduction of an African view of science and technology that addresses environmental education in the twenty-first century is the key. This will lead to the empowerment of Africa in the new ‘information society’ of the twenty-first century.

III. **Action-oriented approaches**

May I now make a call to action.

Recommendation No. 2 calls for Member States to reinforce their national plans of action in basic education for all and for UNESCO, in collaboration with United Nations donor agencies, to support a long-term action plan.

I count on the Member States to fulfil their responsibility. From UNESCO’s side, you have already been advised by the Director-General that in our future action, priority will be given to Africa, to LDCs and to women and girls. The broad guidelines for the long-term action plan that you have called for can, and will, be accommodated within these thrusts.
This will be the culmination of an evolving process: International Literacy Year in 1990 was a time of consciousness-raising; 1991 is a year for setting clear targets and priorities through round tables. 1992-1993 will be years of concrete actions with emphasis on supporting national actions.

The partnership between Member States and UNESCO will be reinforced through special resources for so-called ‘upstream’ assistance on project development. Our Executive Board has called for most UNESCO field offices to be converted from being primarily representational to primarily operational. NEIDA will be revitalised as you have requested in Recommendation No. 4.

A host of specific technical actions will also take place. Through training under ‘Priority: Africa’ and IIIEP, national capacities to manage scarce resources for education will be strengthened; BREDA will prepare specialists in literacy, primary education and stimulate actions for making low-cost learning materials, furniture and buildings.

And many more. Indeed, all parts of the education system will be encouraged to support this long-term plan. The universities, which have suffered tragic consequences under structural adjustment, will be urged to re-establish their key roles in training teachers and in supporting educational research.

In this latter regard, we cannot leave here today without thanking you for the generous offers of putting national institutions at the disposal of your neighbours, and for your offers to participate in UNITWIN. We are already at work negotiating the creation of UNESCO chairs in Senegal, Kenya and Uganda and one to support a network of universities in the southern African subregion. Through these, South-South and South-North co-operation - yes I said South to North co-operation - is being launched.

IV. Co-operation

This leads us to a discussion of the wider issue of co-operation for development in this region as outlined in Recommendation No. 4.

The spirit of Jomtien was that grand alliances would be created in support of education for all. These alliances were seen to encompass governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies and NGOs.

This Conference has been an opportunity for UNESCO to catalyse interactions between agencies, NGOs and Member States in Africa. It has also served to highlight the growing support that bilateral agencies are putting into basic education, thanks to the visibility created by Jomtien.

UNESCO has a long history of co-operation with African countries and major donor agencies in setting up their post-independence educational systems. The present is a time of crisis and this is leading to new modalities where - happily - there is a growing role for governments in managing external assistance. I must put on record that UNESCO is proud of the progress achieved, and sees itself continuing as an active partner in education development in Africa.

This being said, we must all recognise that UNESCO is neither a fund, nor a bank. It is an intergovernmental organisation, which belongs to you, and to you alone. It is therefore incumbent on us to work for you, our Member States, to improve your educational systems. We will, therefore, do our level best to provide you with the statistical and philosophical ammunition needed
to stage various policy alternatives and enlist support from planning and finance ministries and the donor community. In addition, we will remain your ally in mobilising these resources.

No international agency can faithfully serve its constituency unless, through a true democratic process, that constituency has the power to express needs. Under Recommendation No. 3, I see us moving carefully - but surely - in the direction of consolidating and improving the existing mechanisms. Thanks to your thoughtful work during this Conference on this matter, I see a stronger alliance being forged between UNESCO and the governments of this region.

V. **Down to grass roots**

UNESCO was founded to promote international solidarity and understanding through education, through the sharing of knowledge and experience. It is not about big business, money or power, but about people. In education, this means that our ultimate goal is to help parents, pupils and teachers, and to forge links between them.

It is essential that we as educators listen to parents and involve them in building bridges between schools and the community. In this endeavour UNESCO Clubs play an important role and we wish their meeting here in Dakar in two weeks’ time every success.

UNESCO is seeking to facilitate solidarity and people-to-people links at all levels. The Associated Schools Project links 2,300 schools from 99 countries enabling pupils to experience, through direct contact, the cultures and concerns of others.

The contribution of teachers is essential for promoting literacy and basic education for all. I have noted with deep interest the pledge by the various teachers’ organisations represented at the Conference to do their best to collaborate with national authorities in the task which lies ahead.

Under UNESCO and ILO aegis, in 1966, a recommendation on the status of teachers was established. I am delighted to announce that a special ceremony will commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of this normative instrument during the session of UNESCO’s General Conference next October.

We consider that whatever we may set out as targets in conferences on education, has to be implemented by teachers. Let us give them the tools to do the job, the capacity to use such tools, and due recognition and rewards for the work they do.

I trust I have made it clear, Mr Chairman, UNESCO seeks to play its part in mobilising the moral and financial support needed to implement the recommendations of this Conference. I hope that we will always be sensitive to your hopes and difficulties, and in practical and concrete ways support your efforts in the struggle against poverty, disease and illiteracy.

**Conclusion**

The Government and the People of Senegal, and more particularly you, Mr Chairman, have been a most generous and willing host. On behalf of UNESCO and the delegates, our deepest thanks. The Member States have provided much material for the working papers and have contributed to our joint search for ways of promoting literacy and basic education for all, while our colleagues in the OAU, ECA and United Nations family, the donor community and NGOs have renewed their pledges to support us in the heavy task ahead.
Africa and UNESCO have an obligation to help ensure that global responses to the problems we have discussed become worthy of humanity. The purpose of your recommendations has been to help ensure the success of this endeavour in the African context.

Mr Chairman, honourable delegates, now is the time to act on the recommendations. As the Director-General so aptly put it in his new book, ‘Tomorrow is always too late’.
ANNEX IV

List of documents

I. Working documents

Provisional agenda ED-9 1/MINEDAF/1
Annotated agenda ED-91/MINEDAF/1 Ann.
Provisional Rules of Procedure ED-9 1/MINEDAF/2
Main working document ED-9 1/MINEDAF/3

II. Information documents

General information ED-91/MINEDAF/INF. 1
Suggestions concerning the organisation of the work of the Conference ED-9 1/MINEDAF/INF.2
List of documents ED-91/MINEDAF/INF.3
Provisional list of participants ED-9 1/MINEDAF/INF.4

III. Reference documents

Statistical analysis document ED-9 1/MINEDAF/REF. 1
Evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V ED-9 1/MINEDAF/REF.2
Economic and social development priorities for the 1990s ED-9 1/MINEDAF/REF.3
Inter-African co-operation for educational development ED-9 1/MINEDAF/REF.4
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS/LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Les noms et titres qui figurent dans les listes ci-après sont reproduits dans la forme où ils ont été communiqués au Secretariat par les delegations intéressées. Les pays sont mentionnés dans l’ordre alphabétique français.

Names and titles in the following lists are reproduced as handed to the Secretariat by the delegations concerned. Countries are shown in the French alphabetical order.

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