



Recife Declaration of the E-9 Countries

Adopted by the E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting
Recife, Brazil, 31 January-2 February 2000



Preamble

1. We, the Ministers of Education and representatives of the E-9 countries comprising Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan, and accounting for more than 50 per cent of the world's population, having assembled in Recife, Brazil from 31 January to 2 February 2000, have reviewed the progress of EFA in our countries. Having taken note of the national reports of the nine countries, we recognize with deep satisfaction that, since the Jomtien Conference, March 1990, and the EFA Summit of Heads of State of the E-9 countries, New Delhi, December 1993, there have been significant breakthroughs in all of the nine countries.
2. Despite the diversities among E-9 countries, there is a consensus regarding the achievements recorded during the past ten years in the field of education as well as the need to draft a new visionary agenda for the new millennium that will reaffirm basic education as a human right.
3. We believe that the objectives of Education for All should be pursued through evaluations of the programmes specific to each country and by targeted actions to address the multiplicity of problems. We also believe that the realities of the twenty-first century demand that we all adopt the newest methods and most modern technologies in our pursuit of truly global modernization in the field of education in order to achieve excellence for all. These challenges affect not only the E-9 countries but are also shared by all countries throughout the world.
4. The key challenge is the promotion of social and economic development with equity through quality education for all. Besides formal organizations for basic education, we should seek to engage civil society in a broader context with all its creativity and commitment. We underline that education is for excellence and excellence is for all.
5. The fact is that some of the E-9 countries are in a state of transition, confronted simultaneously by the challenges of advancing to higher levels of development while also addressing the problems of underdevelopment. These countries work to meet advanced standards of excellence while still dealing with pockets of backwardness in education.
6. We attest to the crucial role of national governments in partnership with provincial governments, local bodies, NGOs and civil society in meeting EFA goals with renewed enthusiasm.
7. New paradigms of international solidarity are urgently needed. These new models require increased technical co-operation among countries and regions as well as broad technical and financial support from international agencies

and development partners. Such co-operation in turn requires the careful designing of specific projects that will allow us to draw on the experience garnered throughout the world in solving educational problems over the past decade.

We acknowledge the achievements of the decade which include:

- Massive reduction in adult illiteracy;
- Increase in early childhood education strategies that involve parents and that support vulnerable families;
- Substantial increase in pre-school educational services;
- Significant advance towards universal elementary education;
- Improved gender equity in school access for boys and girls and for school attendance;
- Addressing early development of attitudes and values for coexistence and civic education;
- Decentralization of educational services;
- Development of a national curriculum framework;
- Advance in the process of inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools;
- Use of distance education for the expansion of learning and for teacher training;
- Development of programmes for specific target groups with appropriate inbuilt incentives;
- Strengthening of national database, evaluation and accreditation systems for education;
- Expansion of partnerships with NGOs, civil society and private sector;
- Increasing public awareness for EFA through media and advocacy.

We recognize the following challenges:

- Persistence of large numbers of illiterates in some countries;
- Provision of access to basic education in remote and inaccessible areas;
- Expansion of provision of early childhood education and development;
- Further massive reduction of illiteracy and promotion of technological learning and life skills;
- Improved quality and learning achievement in education;
- Addressing adequately existing inequities in education, particularly in regard to girls' and women's education;
- Mastery learning and excellence for all.

We declare the following as our goals:

- According highest national priority to EFA and in particular to the eradication of adult illiteracy;
- Increasing the number of students that complete basic, middle and higher education;
- Total inclusion of children with special needs in the mainstream schools;
- Effecting changes in legislation to extend basic education and include education for all in policy statements;
- Implementation of new educational modalities that link education to the work force;
- Ensuring access and equity for population located in inaccessible areas;
- Developing national networks of communication systems for universal school access to internet and all forms of electronic media;

- Strengthening moral values in the basic education curriculum, stressing the importance of democratic values such as justice, fairness, tolerance, and respect for diversity and equity for teachers and students;
- Enhancement of quality education measured not only by national standards attained in traditional subjects but also by the acquisition of knowledge, life skills and technological abilities;
- Improvement of the quality of initial and in-service teacher education;
- Development of special programmes that respond directly to the problems of groups that have been traditionally excluded from development;
- Increasing the participation of civil society including the local community to promote basic learning and lifelong learning for all;
- Increasing modern technology and distance learning in all aspects of EFA;
- Establishing an effective programme for post-literacy and continuing education;
- Paying greater attention to education of adolescents (HIV/AIDS) to equip them with life skills;
- Strengthening databases for education;
- Continuing necessary reforms in management of education to improve administration and supervision;
- Sharpening focus on gender equity;
- Ensuring excellence for all in education.

Resource mobilization

We wish to strengthen our resolve to further increase resource allocations for EFA, at the level of national government down to the provincial, state and local bodies, and by mustering the support of civil society, NGOs as well as industry and business towards contribution and involvement in EFA.

The success of the EFA programme critically depends on mobilization of adequate resources for education. While all the countries acknowledge this requirement, some of the countries of the group face enormous constraints in mobilizing adequate resources.

The role of the international community

Acknowledging the valuable support and assistance offered at the national level by UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank and bilateral donors in pursuing the goals of EFA, we would like to invite these agencies to renew and review their role and strategies in conformity with national plans and priorities and to evolve a more co-ordinated framework for providing international assistance to quality education for all.

We unequivocally call on the international community to prioritize assistance to:

1. Support National Plans for Basic Education of each Member State;
2. Facilitate reduction and writing off of debt burden in a manner that provides additional funding for education as well as commits further resources to education;
3. Promote advocacy and awareness of the benefits of literacy in alleviating poverty, promoting health and mitigating social tensions in order to assure sustainable development;
4. Provide technical assistance to improve educational statistics and information systems and strengthening the evaluation for quality education for all.

Vision for the future

We acknowledge that quality education for all will be our biggest challenge and also our greatest hope. Universal access to education will allow our peoples to participate more effectively in an interactive world.

The onset of the information and knowledge revolution is changing our lives in an unprecedented manner. Knowledge has become the capital and the currency of the twenty-first century. New technologies, new mechanisms and immensely large and varied sources of information are influencing our private and public lives. While remaining committed to utilizing the advanced and modern technologies, we shall remain equally

committed to maintaining the cultural identities of our respective societies and countries.

We realize that we can help the world advance the cause of humanity by striking a balance between acquisition of information and knowledge and enrichment of the essence of our rich heritage. We realize the need for a synergy between technological modernity and traditional values. We look ahead to a future in which our countries are liberated from the burden of illiteracy and are fully empowered to move in fruitful harmony towards peace, prosperity and global stability, security and technological development.

The Way Forward

We, the Ministers and representatives of E-9 countries, reaffirm our joint commitment and pledge to sustain, intensify and accelerate our efforts and policies for achieving the laudable goals of EFA. While appreciating the sincerity and enormity of efforts made by governments and civil society in our countries, we acknowledge the seriousness of the problems that continue to impede our progress towards EFA. We appreciate that new challenges have surfaced over the past decade that need to be addressed in an innovative and creative manner. We see renewed hope in the emerging technologies that provide undreamed-of opportunities for lifelong learning and that have the potential to enable our countries to leap-frog into the new millennium with hope.

We call on the international community to express their solidarity and to continue to lend their support to our endeavours in this regard. We believe that a continuous sharing of knowledge and experiences could make a visible contribution towards a more efficient implementation of national EFA policies and programmes. We wish to strengthen alliances and effective partnerships between countries and the international community to give a fresh impetus to EFA. We approach the new millennium with the hope and optimism generated by our achievements and resolve to address the challenges of EFA with even greater determination and commitment to achieve excellence for all. ■