Keynote Speech and Presentation by

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on the occasion of Eastern Africa High Level Forum on Education for All

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Honourable Minister of Education in Kenya, Professor Samson Ongeri,
Honourable Assistant Minister of Education in Kenya, Mr Calist Mwatela,
Honourable Ministers of Education from Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Uganda and Somalia,
Honourable Vice- and Deputy Ministers from Mauritius, Somalia and Zanzibar,
Permanent Secretaries, Directors, Senior Officials of Ministries of Education
and education institutions in Kenya and from Eastern Africa region,
Secretaries-General of National Commission for UNESCO in Kenya, Tanzania
and Uganda,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here in Mombasa with you today. Let me first
congratulate the Honourable Minister of Education of Kenya and the Kenyan
National Commission for UNESCO on the excellent initiative taken to organize
this first-ever High-Level Forum on Education for All in Eastern Africa. It will
give us a much-needed opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved to date – and what more needs to be done as we approach 2015.

It is fitting that this Forum is taking place in Kenya, a country that has shown a strong commitment to expanding learning opportunities for all. The Government of Kenya recently completed a comprehensive national assessment on how far Kenya has progressed towards achievement of the six Education for All goals since 2001. This is one example of the government’s resolve to tackle the remaining challenges on the road to EFA and to continuously improve the Kenyan education system.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Without quality, inclusive and equitable education, there can be no sustainable human development. Indeed, education is central to development; you are well aware of the strong connections between education and income, and between education and health, among other examples.

With less than four years until the target date for the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals, we are seeing two main trends. The first is that government resources are beginning to shift away from primary education and towards the secondary and tertiary levels. The second trend is that the relative importance given to education by donors has declined, in a context of economic slowdown. It is estimated that the resources available for education in sub-Saharan Africa may have fallen by US$4.6 billion a year on average in 2009 and 2010. This is jeopardizing the strong advances made over the past decade.

As you know, UNESCO promotes an integrated and holistic vision of education, in which each of the individual levels and settings of education
contributes to the development of the others. This need for balanced development of education systems is why UNESCO is paying increasing attention to the question of higher education – a level that has too often been neglected by donors. We must accelerate progress towards the full set of Education for All goals, and give more emphasis to ensuring that education systems are equitable.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would now like to make a brief presentation on how far the world and sub-Saharan Africa have come in achieving EFA since 2000.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

As you can see, significant progress has been made in education since 2000. But much remains to be done if we are to make quality education and lifelong learning a reality for all.

Let me once again thank the Government of Kenya and in particular the Honourable Minister for having taken the initiative to organize this Forum and invited UNESCO to take part in it. I very much look forward to engaging in substantive dialogue with all of you over the next two days.

With our collective commitment and actions, achieving quality education and lifelong learning for all is within our reach.

Thank you very much.