

The Dakar Framework for Action

Education For All: Meeting our Collective Commitments

Text adopted by the

**World Education Forum
Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000**

The Dakar Framework

Education For All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments

1. Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, we, the participants in the World Education Forum, commit ourselves to the achievement of education for all (EFA) goals and targets for every citizen and for every society.
2. The Dakar Framework is a collective commitment to action. Governments have an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained. This is a responsibility that will be met most effectively through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by cooperation with regional and international agencies and institutions.
3. We re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990), supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.
4. We welcome the commitments made by the international community to basic education throughout the 1990s, notably at the World Summit for Children (1990), the Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (1994), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the Mid-Term Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (1996), the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (1997), and the International

Conference on Child Labour (1997). The challenge now is to deliver on these commitments.

5. The EFA 2000 Assessment demonstrates that there has been significant progress in many countries. But it is unacceptable in the year 2000 that more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education systems, and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies. Youth and adults are denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in their societies. Without accelerated progress towards education for all, national and internationally agreed targets for poverty reduction will be missed, and inequalities between countries and within societies will widen.

6. Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalization. Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency.

7. We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:
 - (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
 - (ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
 - (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
 - (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

- (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- (vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

8. To achieve these goals, we the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:

- (i) mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;
- (ii) promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;
- (iii) ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;
- (iv) develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;
- (v) meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict;
- (vi) implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
- (vii) implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- (viii) create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all;
- (ix) enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers;
- (x) harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals;

- (xi) systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels; and
 - (xii) build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards education for all.
9. Drawing on the evidence accumulated during the national and regional EFA assessments, and building on existing national sector strategies, all States will be requested to develop or strengthen existing national plans of action by 2002 at the latest. These plans should be integrated into a wider poverty reduction and development framework, and should be developed through more transparent and democratic processes, involving stakeholders, especially peoples' representatives, community leaders, parents, learners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. The plans will address problems associated with the chronic under-financing of basic education by establishing budget priorities that reflect a commitment to achieving EFA goals and targets at the earliest possible date, and no later than 2015. They will also set out clear strategies for overcoming the special problems facing those currently excluded from educational opportunities, with a clear commitment to girls' education and gender equity. The plans will give substance and form to the goals and strategies set out in this Framework, and to the commitments made during a succession of international conferences in the 1990s. Regional activities to support national strategies will be based on strengthened regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives.
10. Political will and stronger national leadership are needed for the effective and successful implementation of national plans in each of the countries concerned. However, political will must be underpinned by resources. The international community acknowledges that many countries currently lack the resources to achieve education for all within an acceptable time-frame. New financial resources, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, must therefore be mobilized by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, including the World Bank and regional development banks, and the private sector. We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.

11. The international community will deliver on this collective commitment by launching with immediate effect a global initiative aimed at developing the strategies and mobilizing the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts. Options to be considered under this initiative will include:
 - (i) increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education;
 - (ii) ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance;
 - (iii) facilitating more effective donor coordination;
 - (iv) strengthening sector-wide approaches;
 - (v) providing earlier, more extensive and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education; and
 - (vi) undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards EFA goals and targets, including periodic assessments.

12. There is already evidence from many countries of what can be achieved through strong national strategies supported by effective development cooperation. Progress under these strategies could – and must – be accelerated through increased international support. At the same time, countries with less developed strategies – including countries in transition, countries affected by conflict, and post-crisis countries – must be given the support they need to achieve more rapid progress towards education for all.

13. We will strengthen accountable international and regional mechanisms to give clear expression to these commitments and to ensure that the Dakar Framework for Action is on the agenda of every international and regional organization, every national legislature and every local decision-making forum.

14. The EFA 2000 Assessment highlights that the challenge of education for all is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, in South Asia, and in the least developed countries. Accordingly, while no country in need should be denied international assistance, priority should be given to these regions and countries. Countries in conflict or undergoing reconstruction should also be given special attention in building up their education systems to meet the needs of all learners.

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

16. The heart of EFA activity lies at the country level. National EFA Forums will be strengthened or established to support the achievement of EFA. All relevant ministries and national civil society organizations will be systematically represented in these Forums. They should be transparent and democratic and should constitute a framework for implementation at subnational levels. Countries will prepare comprehensive National EFA Plans by 2002 at the latest. For those countries with significant challenges, such as complex crises or natural disasters, special technical support will be provided by the international community. Each National EFA Plan will:
 - (i) be developed by government leadership in direct and systematic consultation with national civil society;
 - (ii) attract coordinated support of all development partners;
 - (iii) specify reforms addressing the six EFA goals;
 - (iv) establish a sustainable financial framework;
 - (v) be time-bound and action-oriented;
 - (vi) include mid-term performance indicators; and

- (vii) achieve a synergy of all human development efforts, through its inclusion within the national development planning framework and process.
17. Where these processes and a credible plan are in place, partner members of the international community undertake to work in a consistent, coordinated and coherent manner. Each partner will contribute according to its comparative advantage in support of the National EFA Plans to ensure that resource gaps are filled.
 18. Regional activities to support national efforts will be based on existing regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives, augmented where necessary. Regions and subregions will decide on a lead EFA network that will become the Regional or Subregional Forum with an explicit EFA mandate. Systematic involvement of, and coordination with, all relevant civil society and other regional and subregional organizations are essential. These Regional and Subregional EFA Forums will be linked organically with, and be accountable to, National EFA Forums. Their functions will be: coordination with all relevant networks; setting and monitoring regional/subregional targets; advocacy; policy dialogue; the promotion of partnerships and technical cooperation; the sharing of best practices and lessons learned; monitoring and reporting for accountability; and promoting resource mobilization. Regional and international support will be available to strengthen Regional and Subregional Forums and relevant EFA capacities, especially within Africa and South Asia.
 19. UNESCO will continue its mandated role in coordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. In line with this, UNESCO's Director-General will convene annually a high-level, small and flexible group. It will serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization. Informed by a monitoring report from the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and, in particular, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, and inputs from Regional and Subregional EFA Forums, it will also be an opportunity to hold the global community to account for commitments made in Dakar.

It will be composed of highest-level leaders from governments and civil society of developing and developed countries, and from development agencies.

20. UNESCO will serve as the Secretariat. It will refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work. This will involve working groups on each of the six goals adopted at Dakar. This Secretariat will work closely with other organizations and may include staff seconded from them.

21. Achieving Education for All will require additional financial support by countries and increased development assistance and debt relief for education by bilateral and multilateral donors, estimated to cost in the order of \$8 billion a year. It is therefore essential that new, concrete financial commitments be made by national governments and also by bilateral and multilateral donors including the World Bank and the regional development banks, by civil society and by foundations.

28 April 2000
Dakar, Senegal

**Education For All:
Meeting our Collective Commitments**

**Notes on the
Dakar Framework for Action**

This document provides details on each goal and strategy of the draft Framework for Action on the basis of the many suggestions provided before and during the World Education Forum, most notably from its 24 strategy sessions.

prepared by
the World Education Forum Drafting Committee

Paris, 23 May 2000

I INTRODUCTION

1. The Dakar Framework for Action is a re-affirmation of the vision set out in the *World Declaration on Education for All* in Jomtien a decade ago. It expresses the international community's collective commitment to pursue a broad-based strategy for ensuring that the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult are met within a generation and sustained thereafter.
2. The World Education Forum in Dakar provided the opportunity to assess the achievements, lessons and failures of the past decade. The EFA 2000 Assessment represents an unparalleled effort to take stock of the state of basic education in the world. It includes national assessments of the progress achieved since Jomtien in 183 countries, the problems encountered and recommendations for future action. Synthesis reports summarise the main findings of these assessments by region. In addition, fourteen special thematic studies were undertaken, surveys were conducted on the quality of learning achievement in over 30 countries, and a comprehensive collection and synthesis of case-studies on the involvement of NGOs in education was prepared.
3. The Assessment is a rich store of information and analysis. Five regional EFA conferences (sub-Saharan Africa, Johannesburg; Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok; Arab States and North Africa, Cairo; the Americas and the Caribbean, Santo Domingo; Europe and North America, Warsaw) and a conference of the nine high-population (E-9) countries (Recife), discussed and translated the outcomes of the Assessment into regional frameworks for action which are an integral part of this document and underpin the Dakar Framework for Action.
4. The vision of Jomtien remains pertinent and powerful. It provides a broad and comprehensive view of education and its critical role in empowering individuals and transforming societies. Its key points and principles include universal access to learning; a focus on equity; emphasis on learning outcomes; broadening the means and the scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; and strengthening partnerships. Tragically, reality has fallen far short of this vision: millions of people are still denied their right to education and the opportunities it brings to live safer, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives. Such a failure has multiple causes: weak political will, insufficient financial resources and the inefficient use of those available, the burden of debt, inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor and the excluded, a lack of attention to the quality of learning and an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparities. There can be no doubt that the barriers to achieving Education for All are formidable. Yet they can and must be overcome.
5. The Assessment shows that progress has been achieved, proving that Education for All is a realistic and achievable goal. But it needs to be frankly acknowledged that progress has been uneven and far too slow. At the start of a new millennium, the EFA 2000 Assessment shows the following:

- (ii) Of the more than 800 million children under six years of age, fewer than a third benefit from any form of early childhood education.
 - (iii) Some 113 million children, 60 per cent of whom are girls, have no access to primary schooling.
 - (iv) At least 880 million adults are illiterate, of whom the majority are women.
6. These figures represent an affront to human dignity and denial of the right to education. They stand as major barriers to eliminating poverty and attaining sustainable development, and are clearly unacceptable.
 7. The Dakar Framework sets six major EFA goals and proposes twelve major strategies. It puts forward twelve major strategies informed by the experience of the past decade and the changing global context. These include the international development targets for education to which national governments and the international community are already committed.
 8. Starting from early childhood and extending throughout life, the learners of the twenty-first century will require access to high quality educational opportunities that are responsive to their needs, equitable and gender-sensitive. These opportunities must neither exclude nor discriminate. Since the pace, style, language and circumstances of learning will never be uniform for all, there should be room for diverse formal or less formal approaches, as long as they ensure sound learning and confer equivalent status.
 9. The right to education imposes an obligation upon States to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to meet their basic learning needs. Primary education should be free, compulsory and of good quality. The education systems of tomorrow, however diversified they may be, will need to be transparent and accountable in how they are governed, managed and financed. The indispensable role of the State in education must be supplemented and supported by bold and comprehensive educational partnerships at all levels of society. Education for All implies the involvement and commitment of all to education.

II ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Achievements and lessons

10. The EFA 2000 Assessment conducted at national, regional, and global levels show progress has been made over the last decade towards the vision reflected in the Jomtien Declaration.
11. Worldwide, primary school enrolments increased by some 82 million pupils since 1990, with 44 million more girls in school in 1998 than in 1990 – figures which more than any other symbolise the serious efforts of many countries to advance in the face of often severe economic constraints and continued rapid population growth. At the end of the 1990s, developing countries as a whole had achieved net enrolment rates in excess of 80 per cent. Repetition and dropout rates had declined. There has been some improvement, albeit limited, in gender equality in primary enrolment in many regions, with the critical exception of sub-Saharan Africa. Early childhood care and education have expanded modestly, mainly in urban areas. Virtually all countries in the world have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and have thereby accepted an obligation to ensure the right of every child to a basic education. There has been a gradual growth in non-formal education and skills training. While levels of illiteracy remain unacceptably high, a measure of progress has been achieved. The overall adult literacy rate has risen to 85 per cent for men and to 74 per cent for women. Increased levels of education have enabled men and women to make more informed choices about family size. This is having an impact on demographic growth rates, a factor of great importance for both education and development.
12. These quantitative achievements tell nothing of the plight of the millions who are still excluded from education or of alienated youth and their painful struggle to find a place and retain their values in changing societies. Information is also sparse on the nature and quality of teaching and learning and of educational outcomes at all levels in education systems.
13. There is a powerful correlation between low enrolment, poor retention and unsatisfactory learning outcomes and the incidence of poverty. Experience in the post-Jomtien decade, however, has demonstrated that significant progress can be made towards the goals of Education for All where there is a strong political commitment, backed by new partnerships with civil society and more strategic support from funding agencies. It is also clear that ensuring that girls and boys benefit equally from education requires nothing less than the integration of gender equality concerns into the design and implementation of sector policies and strategies. The importance of gathering and carefully analysing reliable gender-disaggregated data at national and sub-national levels is evident.
14. The many factors that impinge on the demand for education are now better understood, as are the multiple causes that exclude children, young people and adults from learning opportunities. The range of actions required to increase the participation and retention of girls in school has received widespread attention.

Knowledge about the effectiveness of teachers and other educators, the central role of appropriate learning materials, the need for a context-specific mix of 'old' and 'new' technologies, the importance of local languages for initial literacy and the major influence of the community in the life of schools and other education programmes has increased. The value of early childhood care and education for later school success and the need for strong linkages between the different sub-sectors of education and among basic education, health, nutrition, safe water and the natural environment have received greater attention and are better understood.

Challenges and opportunities

15. The tangible but modest gains overall of the past decade still call for caution. Many countries continue to face the challenges of defining the meaning, purpose and content of basic education in the context of a fast-moving world and of assessing learning outcomes and achievement. Many of the qualitative and informal aspects of education have still not been clearly assessed. The huge diversity of contexts makes performance and achievements difficult to measure and compare. Moreover, growing educational disparities within and between countries are a matter for serious concern.
16. Many governments and agencies have focused their efforts on the easy to reach and they have neglected those excluded from a basic education, whether for social, economic or geographic reasons. What is clear is that quality must not suffer as access expands and that improvements in quality should not benefit the economically well-off at the expense of the poor, as has happened, for example, in the expansion of early childhood care and education.
17. The education of girls remains a major challenge: despite the international attention that it has received, 60 per cent of all children without access to primary education are girls.
18. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where progress has been most difficult to achieve, clearly present a much deeper challenge than world averages imply and will require particular attention if the goals of Education for All are to be reached in each and every country. In the Americas and the Caribbean, deep differences between regions and social groups based on income inequality continue to hamper progress towards Education for All and must receive due attention.
19. A key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All must encompass not only primary education, but also early childhood education, literacy and life skills programmes. Using both formal and non-formal approaches, it must take account of the needs of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs. It is encouraging that many governments, funding agencies and civil society organizations are increasingly rallying to this more inclusive and comprehensive view of education.

20. Ensuring that Education for All is provided with adequate, equitable and sustainable resources is the foremost challenge. Many governments do not give education sufficient priority in their national budgets. Too many do not use resources for education effectively and efficiently and often subsidize better-off groups at the expense of the poor. At the same time, stabilization programmes often fail to protect education budgets. As a direct consequence, user charges continue to be a major deterrent to poor children attending school and to young people and adults in need of non-formal learning. In some countries, passing the cost burden on to poor parents has had a devastating impact on enrolment and retention. Education must neither exclude nor discriminate. Every government has the responsibility to provide free, quality basic education, so that no child will be denied access because of an inability to pay.
21. Governments need to explore more actively alternative and innovative ways of increasing the resources available to support Education for All and to develop clearly defined strategies for achieving EFA goals, for which they take real and sustained ownership. Debt relief to the poorest countries remains inadequate, with too little being provided to too few countries too late. Debt reduction programmes should offer governments an opportunity to give priority to education within overall poverty reduction frameworks.
22. While the proportion of international assistance allocated to basic education increased in the 1990s, there was an overall decline in total development assistance. The first trend should be supported and the second reversed. There is considerable scope for the international community to demonstrate, in a co-operative and accountable way, that it can be effective in supporting well-defined national sector strategies and in helping to release the significant additional resources that many funding agencies are willing to provide.
23. New ways of working that are emerging within the wider development context also represent opportunities for achieving EFA goals. Greater co-operation between national and international agencies at the country level, through structures and mechanisms such as Comprehensive Development Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, offers the potential for resource-related partnerships for basic education.
24. Genuinely participatory development is more likely to occur where there is a stronger and more vocal recognition of education as a fundamental human right and where representative democracy has taken root. The growing importance of participatory poverty assessments and household surveys also highlights a positive trend in the development of education programmes and systems that are genuinely responsive to well-defined needs and priorities.
25. While inadequate institutional capacity and weak political processes still prevent many governments from responding to the priorities of their citizens, the spread of democratic principles around the world, the growing contribution of civil society to democratic processes, the fight against corruption and the process of decentralisation that is ongoing in many countries all have the potential to contribute greatly to

building a solid foundation for the achievement of effective, equitable and sustainable Education for All.

26. Globalization is both an opportunity and a challenge. It is a process which must be shaped and managed so as to ensure equity and sustainability. Globalisation is generating new wealth and resulting in the greater interconnectedness and interdependence of economies and societies. Driven by the revolution in information technologies and the increased mobility of capital, it has the potential to help reduce poverty and inequality throughout the world, and to harness the new technologies for basic education. Yet globalisation carries with it the danger of creating a market place in knowledge that excludes the poor and the disadvantaged. Countries and households denied access to opportunities for basic education in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy face the prospect of deepening marginalization within an increasingly prosperous international economy.
27. The threat posed by HIV/AIDS to the achievement of EFA goals and to development more broadly, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, presents an enormous challenge. The terrifying impact of HIV/AIDS on educational demand, supply and quality requires explicit and immediate attention in national policy-making and planning. Programmes to control and reduce the spread of the virus must make maximum use of education's potential to transmit messages on prevention and to change attitudes and behaviours.
28. The significant growth of tensions, conflict and war, both within nations and between nations and peoples, is a cause of great concern. Education has a key role to play in preventing conflict in the future and building lasting peace and stability.

III GOALS

“Basic learning needs...comprise both essential learning tools...and the basic learning content 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.” (World Declaration on Education for All, Article 1, paragraph 1).

29. The goals and strategies set out below establish a Framework for Action that is designed to enable all individuals to realise their right to learn and to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the development of their society. They are global in nature, drawn from the outcomes of the regional EFA conferences and the international development targets to which countries are already committed. Individual countries, through a process of consultation among all stakeholders in education and with the assistance of the wider international community and EFA follow-up mechanisms, should set their own goals, intermediate targets and timelines, within existing or new national education plans.

1 Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

30. All young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environments that allow them to become healthy, alert, and secure and be able to learn. The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality early childhood care and education, both in families and in more structured programmes, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive, focusing on all of the child’s needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psycho-social development. They should be provided in the child’s mother tongue and help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities and families can help ensure the provision of good care and education for children, especially for those most disadvantaged, through activities centred on the child, focused on the family, based within the community and supported by national, multi-sectoral policies and adequate resources.

31. Governments, across relevant ministries, have the primary responsibility of formulating early childhood care and education policies within the context of national EFA plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programmes for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal school systems. The education of parents and other caregivers in better child care, building on traditional practices, and the systematic use of early childhood indicators are important elements in achieving this goal.

2 Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality

32. All children must have the opportunity to fulfil their right to quality education in schools or alternative programmes at whatever level of education is considered 'basic'. All states must fulfil their obligation to offer free and compulsory primary education in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international commitments. The international agreement on the 2015 target date for achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) in all countries will require commitment and political will from all levels of government. For the millions of children living in poverty, who suffer multiple disadvantages, there must be an unequivocal commitment that education be free of tuition and other fees, and that everything possible be done to reduce or eliminate costs such as those for learning materials, uniforms, school meals and transport. Wider social policies, interventions and incentives should be used to mitigate indirect opportunity costs of attending school. No one should be denied the opportunity to complete a good quality primary education because it is unaffordable. Child labour must not stand in the way of education. The inclusion of children with special needs, from disadvantaged ethnic minorities and migrant populations, from remote and isolated communities and from urban slums, and others excluded from education, must be an integral part of strategies to achieve UPE by 2015.
33. While commitment to attaining universal enrolment is essential, improving and sustaining the quality of basic education is equally important in ensuring effective learning outcomes. In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly – providing relevant content in an accessible and appealing format. Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners. The EFA 2000 Assessment suggests a wide range of ways in which schools can respond to the needs of their pupils, including affirmative action programmes for girls that seek to remove the obstacles to their enrolment, bilingual education for the children of ethnic minorities, and a range of imaginative and diverse approaches to address and actively engage children who are not enrolled in school.

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

32. All young people and adults must be given the opportunity to gain the knowledge and develop the values, attitudes and skills which will enable them to develop their capacities to work, to participate fully in their society, to take control of their own lives, and to continue learning. No country can be expected to develop into a modern and open economy without having a certain proportion of its work force completing

secondary education. In most countries this requires an expansion of the secondary system.

33. Young people, especially adolescent girls, face risks and threats that limit learning opportunities and challenge education systems. These include exploitative labour, the lack of employment, conflict and violence, drug abuse, school-age pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Youth-friendly programmes must be made available which provide the information, skills, counselling and services needed to protect them from these risks.
34. All young people should be given the opportunity for ongoing education. For those who drop out of school or complete school without acquiring the literacy, numeracy and life skills they need, there must be a range of options for continuing their learning. Such opportunities should be both meaningful and relevant to their environment and needs, help them become active agents in shaping their future and develop useful work-related skills.

4 Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

35. All adults have a right to basic education, beginning with literacy, which allows them to engage actively in, and to transform, the world in which they live. There are still some 880 million people who cannot read or write in the world; two-thirds are women. The fragile levels of literacy acquired by many new literates compound the problem. Yet the education of adults remains isolated, often at the periphery of national education systems and budgets.
36. Adult and continuing education must be greatly expanded and diversified, and integrated into the mainstream of national education and poverty reduction strategies. The vital role literacy plays in lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, good health, active citizenship and the improved quality of life for individuals, communities and societies must be more widely recognized. Literacy and continuing education are essential for women's empowerment and gender equality. Closer linkages among formal, non-formal and informal approaches to learning must be fostered to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of adults.
37. Sufficient resources, well-targeted literacy programmes, better trained teachers and the innovative use of technologies are essential in promoting these activities. The scaling up of practical, participatory learning methodologies developed by non-government organizations, which link literacy with empowerment and local development, is especially important. The success of adult education efforts in the next decade will be essentially demonstrated by substantial reduction in disparities between male-female and urban-rural literacy rates.

5 Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality

38. Gender-based discrimination remains one of the most intractable constraints to realising the right to education. Without overcoming this obstacle, Education for All cannot be achieved. Girls are a majority among out-of-school children and youth, although in an increasing number of countries boys are at a disadvantage. Even though the education of girls and women has a powerful trans-generational effect and is a key determinant of social development and women's empowerment, limited progress has been made in increasing girls' participation in basic education.
39. International agreement has already been reached to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. This requires that gender issues be mainstreamed throughout the education system, supported by adequate resources and strong political commitment. Merely ensuring access to education for girls is not enough; unsafe school environments and biases in teacher behaviour and training, teaching and learning processes, and curricula and textbooks often lead to lower completion and achievement rates for girls. By creating safe and gender-sensitive learning environments, it should be possible to remove a major hurdle to girls' participation in education. Increasing levels of women's literacy is another crucial factor in promoting girl's education. Comprehensive efforts therefore need to be made at all levels and in all areas to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote mutual respect between girls and boys, women and men. To make this possible, changes in attitudes, values and behaviour are required.

6 Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

40. Quality is at the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living.
41. Evidence over the last decade has shown that efforts to expand enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to enhance educational quality if children are to be attracted to school, stay there, and achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Scarce resources have frequently been used for expanding systems with insufficient attention to quality improvement in areas such as teacher training and materials development. Recent assessments of learning achievement in some countries have shown that a sizeable percentage of children is acquiring only a fraction of the knowledge and skills they are expected to master. What students are meant to learn has often not been clearly defined, well-taught or accurately assessed.
42. Governments and all other EFA partners must to work together to ensure basic education of quality for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language or ethnic origin. Successful education programmes require: (1) healthy, well-nourished and motivated students; (2) well-trained teachers and active learning techniques; (3)

adequate facilities and learning materials; (4) a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; (5) an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe; (6) a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and, values; (7) participatory governance and management; and (8) respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures.

IV STRATEGIES

43. Education for All is a basic human right at the heart of development. It must be a national and international priority that requires a strong and sustained political commitment, enhanced financial allocations and the participation of all EFA partners in the processes of policy design, strategic planning and the implementation of programmes. Achieving the six goals outlined above necessitates a broad-based approach which extends well beyond the confines of formal education systems. Building on the lessons of the last decade, the implementation of the following strategies will be critical in achieving Education for All.

1 Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for Education for All, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education

44. The Jomtien Framework for Action stated that progress in meeting the basic learning needs of all will depend ultimately on the actions taken within individual countries. This means first that governments must make firm political commitments and allocate sufficient resources to all components of basic education – an absolutely essential step to meeting the state’s obligation to all of its citizens. In many countries this will require increasing the share of national income and budgets allocated to education and, within that, to basic education, balanced by reduced allocations to sectors of lower development priority. Resources have to be used with much greater efficiency and integrity, and governments should set goals for more equitable spending across education sub-sectors. Corruption is a major drain on the effective use of resources for education and should be drastically curbed. Structures are needed to enable civil society to be part of transparent and accountable budgeting and financing systems. Achieving Education for All will also require more creative and sustained mobilisation of resources from other parts of society, including different levels of government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

45. Even with improved mobilisation and allocation of domestic resources, and enhanced efficiency in their use, meeting all the education goals will require additional funding from international development agencies. Funding agencies should allocate a larger share of their resources to support primary and other forms of basic education. The regions and countries, where challenges are greatest, which include much of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, least developed countries and countries emerging from conflict, deserve particular attention.

46. No countries seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources. Funding agencies are willing to allocate significant resources towards Education for All. The key to releasing these resources is evidence of, or potential for, sustained political commitment; effective and transparent mechanisms for consultation with civil society organizations in developing, implementing and monitoring EFA plans; and a well-defined, consultative processes for sector planning and management.

47. This commitment requires that funding agencies co-ordinate their efforts to provide flexible development assistance within the framework of sector-wide reforms and support sector priorities within sound and coherent government-owned poverty reduction programmes. High priority should be given to providing earlier, deeper and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education. Debt relief should not be a substitute for aid.
48. Funding agencies will need to make longer-term and more predictable commitments, and to be more accountable and transparent. They must provide timely and accurate information on their disbursements, and ensure that there is regular reporting at regional and international levels.

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

49. Education, starting with the care and education of young children and continuing through lifelong learning, is central to individual empowerment, the elimination of poverty at household and community level, and broader social and economic development. At the same time, the reduction of poverty facilitates progress toward basic education goals. There are evident synergies between strategies for promoting education and those for reducing poverty that must be exploited both in programme planning and implementation.
50. A multi-sectoral approach to poverty elimination requires that education strategies complement those of the productive sectors as well as of health, population, social welfare, labour, the environment and finance, and be closely linked with civil society. Specific actions in this regard include: (1) integrating basic education strategies into broader national and international poverty alleviation measures such as United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), Comprehensive Development Frameworks and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; and (2) developing 'inclusive' education systems which explicitly identify, target and respond flexibly to the needs and circumstances of the poorest and the most marginalized.

3 Ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development

51. Learners, teachers, parents, communities, non-governmental organizations and other bodies representing civil society must be granted new and expanded political and social scope, at all levels of society, in order to engage governments in dialogue, decision-making and innovation around the goals for basic education. Civil society has much experience and a crucial role to play in identifying barriers to EFA goals, and developing policies and strategies to remove them.
52. Such participation, especially at the local level through partnerships between schools and communities, should not only be limited to endorsing decisions of, or financing

programmes designed by, the state. Rather, at all levels of decision-making, governments must put in place regular mechanisms for dialogue enabling citizens and civil society organizations to contribute to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of basic education. This is essential in order to foster the development of accountable, comprehensive and flexible educational management frameworks. In order to facilitate this process, capacity will often have to be developed in the civil society organizations.

4 Develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management

53. The experience of the last decade has underscored the need for better governance of education systems in terms of efficiency, accountability, transparency and flexibility so that they can respond more effectively to the diverse and continuously changing needs of learners. Reform of educational management is urgently needed – to move from highly centralised, standardised and command-driven forms of management to more decentralised and participatory decision-making, implementation and monitoring at lower levels of accountability. These processes must be buttressed by a management information system that benefits from both new technologies and community participation to produce timely, relevant and accurate information.
54. Country EFA reports and regional action frameworks stemming from the EFA 2000 Assessment recommend the following: (1) establish better regulatory frameworks and administrative mechanisms for managing not only formal and non-formal primary education, but also early childhood, youth and adult education programmes; (2) more sharply delineate responsibilities among different levels of government; (3) ensure that decentralisation does not lead to inequitable distribution of resources; (4) make more efficient use of existing human and financial resources; (5) improve capacities for managing diversity, disparity and change; (6) integrate programmes within education and strengthen their convergence with those of other sectors, especially health, labour and social welfare; and (7) provide training for school leaders and other education personnel.

5 Meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict

55. Conflicts, instability and natural disasters take their toll on education and are a major barrier towards attaining Education for All. The capacity of governments and civil society should be enhanced to rapidly assess educational needs in contexts of crisis and post-conflict situations for children and adults, to restore learning opportunities in secure and friendly environments, and to re-construct destroyed or damaged education systems.

56. Schools should be respected and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace. Education programmes should be designed to promote the full development of the human personality and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26). Such programmes should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, and all ethnic and religious groups; should be sensitive to cultural and linguistic identities, and respectful of diversity; and reinforce a culture of peace. Education should promote not only skills such as the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict but also social and ethical values.

6 Implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education that recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices

57. Achieving Education for All demands that high-level commitment and priority be given to gender equality. Schools, other learning environments and education systems usually mirror the larger society. Efforts in support of gender equality must include specific actions to address discrimination resulting from social attitudes and practices, economic status and culture.

58. Throughout the education system, there must be a commitment to the development of attitudes and behaviours that incorporate gender awareness and analysis. Education systems must also act explicitly to remove gender bias. This includes ensuring that policies and their implementation are supportive of girl's and boy's learning. Teaching and supervisory bodies must be fair and transparent, and rules and regulations, including promotion and disciplinary action, must have equal impact on girls and boys, women and men. Attention must be given to boys' needs in cases where they are disadvantaged.

59. In the learning environment, the content, processes, and context of education must be free of gender bias, and encourage and support equality and respect. This includes teachers' behaviours and attitudes, curriculum and textbooks, and student interactions. Efforts must be made to ensure personal security: Girls are often especially vulnerable to abuse and harassment on the journey to and from school and at school.

7 Implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic

60. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is undermining progress towards Education for All in many parts of the world by seriously affecting educational demand, supply and quality. This situation requires the urgent attention of governments, civil society and the international community. Education systems must go through significant changes if they are to survive the impact of HIV/AIDS and counter its spread, especially in response to the impact on teacher supply and student demand. To achieve EFA goals will necessitate putting HIV/AIDS as the highest priority in the most affected

countries, with strong, sustained political commitment; mainstreaming HIV/AIDS perspectives in all aspects of policy; redesigning teacher training and curricula; and significantly enhancing resources to these efforts.

61. The decade has shown that the pandemic has had, and will increasingly have, a devastating effect on education systems, teachers and learners, with a particularly adverse impact on girls. Stigma and poverty brought about by HIV/AIDS are creating new social castes of children excluded from education and adults with reduced livelihood opportunities. A rights-based response to HIV/AIDS mitigation and ongoing monitoring of the pandemic's impact on EFA goals are essential. This response should include appropriate legislation and administrative actions to ensure to right of HIV/AIDS affected people to education and to combat discrimination within the education sector.
62. Education institutions and structures should create a safe and supportive environment for children and young people in a world with HIV/AIDS, and strengthen their protection from sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation. Flexible non-formal approaches should be adopted to reach children and adults infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, with particular attention to AIDS orphans. Curricula based on life skills approaches should include all aspects of HIV/AIDS care and prevention. Parents and communities should also benefit from HIV/AIDS related programmes. Teachers must be adequately trained both in-service and pre-service in providing HIV/AIDS education, and teachers affected by the pandemic should be supported at all levels.

8 Create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all

63. The quality of learning is and must be at the heart of EFA. All stakeholders – teachers and students, parents and community members, health workers and local government officials – should work together to develop environments conducive to learning. To offer education of good quality, educational institutions and programmes should be adequately and equitably resourced, with the core requirements of safe, environmentally friendly and easily accessible facilities; well motivated and professionally competent teachers; and books, other learning materials and technologies that are context specific, cost effective and available to all learners.
64. Learning environments should also be healthy, safe and protective. This should include: (1) adequate water and sanitation facilities, (2) access to or linkages with health and nutrition services, (3) policies and codes of conducts that enhance physical, psycho-social and emotional health of teachers and learners, and (4) education content and practices leading to knowledge, attitudes, values, and life skills needed for self-esteem, good health, and personal safety.
65. There is an urgent need to adopt effective strategies to identify and include the socially, culturally and economically excluded. This requires participatory analysis of exclusion at household, community and schools levels, and the development of

diverse, flexible, and innovative approaches to learning and an environment that fosters mutual respect and trust.

66. Assessment of learning should include an evaluation of environments, processes and outcomes. Learning outcomes must be well-defined in both cognitive and non-cognitive domains, and be continually assessed as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

9 Enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers

67. Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in schools or in more flexible community-based programmes; they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change. No education reform is likely to succeed without the active participation and ownership of teachers. Teachers at all levels of the education system should be respected and adequately remunerated; have access to training and ongoing professional development and support, including through open and distance learning; and be able to participate, locally and nationally, in decisions affecting their professional lives and teaching environments. Teachers must also accept their professional responsibilities and be accountable to both learners and communities.
68. Clearly defined and more imaginative strategies to identify, attract, train and retain good teachers must be put in place. These strategies should address the new role of teachers in preparing students for an emerging knowledge-based and technology-driven economy. Teachers must be able to understand diversity in learning styles and in the physical and intellectual development of students, and to create stimulating, participatory learning environments.

10 Harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals

69. Information and communication technologies (ICT) must be harnessed to support EFA goals at an affordable cost. These technologies have great potential for knowledge dissemination, effective learning and the development of more efficient education services. This potential will not be realised unless the new technologies serve rather than drive the implementation of education strategies. To be effective, especially in developing countries, ICTs should be combined with more traditional technologies such as books and radios, and be more extensively applied to the training of teachers.
70. The swiftness of ICT developments, their increasing spread and availability, the nature of their content and their declining prices are having major implications for learning. They may tend to increase disparities, weaken social bonds and threaten cultural cohesion. Governments will therefore need to establish clearer policies in regard to science and technology, and undertake critical assessments of ICT experiences and options. These should include their resource implications in relation to the provision of basic education, emphasising choices that bridge the 'digital divide', increase access and quality, and reduce inequity.

71. There is need to tap the potential of ICT to enhance data collection and analysis, and to strengthen management systems, from central ministries through sub-national levels to the school; to improve access to education by remote and disadvantaged communities; to support initial and continuing professional development of teachers; and to provide opportunities to communicate across classrooms and cultures.
72. News media should also be engaged to create and strengthen partnerships with education systems, through the promotion of local newspapers, informed coverage of education issues and continuing education programmes via public service broadcasting.

11 Systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional, and international levels

73. Achieving EFA goals requires setting priorities, defining policies, establishing targets and progress indicators, allocating resources, monitoring performance, and assessing qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Robust and reliable education statistics, disaggregated and based on accurate census data, are essential if progress is to be properly measured, experience shared and lessons learned. Information on the success of particular strategies, on national and international budget allocations for basic education and on civil society participation in Education for All must also be sought. These are all key elements in assessing the accountability of EFA partners. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of EFA, with the full participation of civil society, should be encouraged.
74. When governments are truly committed to educational outcomes, they recognise the fundamental importance of statistics and the need for credible and independent institutions to produce them. The EFA 2000 Assessment identified the existence of important data gaps. Capacity should be increased to fill these gaps, and to produce accurate and timely data, qualitative and quantitative, for analysis and feed-back to policy-makers and practitioners. Attention to collecting disaggregated data at lower levels of the system, both to identify areas of greatest inequity and to provide data for local-level planning, management and evaluation, is essential.
75. Progress towards meeting EFA goals and targets needs to be assessed regularly and systematically to allow for meaningful comparative analyses. The availability of better data at national and international levels will allow governments, civil society and other agencies to gain a clearer understanding of progress toward the goals, to identify regions, countries, and sub-national levels where there is particular success or difficulty, and then to take appropriate action.

12 Build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards Education for All

76. In order to realise the six goals presented in this Framework for Action, broad-based and participatory mechanisms at international, regional and national levels are

essential. The functions of these mechanisms will include, to varying degrees, advocacy, resource mobilisation, monitoring, and knowledge generation and sharing.

77. The heart of EFA activity lies at the country level. National EFA forums will be strengthened or established and countries will prepare national EFA plans by 2002 at the latest. For those countries with significant challenges such as crises or natural disasters, special technical support will be provided by the international community. Members of the international community commit themselves to working in a consistent, co-ordinated and coherent manner in supporting national EFA plans.
78. Regional and sub-regional activities to support national efforts will be based on existing organizations, networks and initiatives, augmented where necessary. These will work in tandem with national EFA forums.
79. UNESCO will continue its mandated role in co-ordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. In line with this, UNESCO will convene annually a high-level, small and flexible group to serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilisation. It will be composed of leaders from governments and civil society and development agencies. UNESCO will refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work.
80. Achieving Education for All will require that new, concrete financial commitments be made by national governments and by bilateral and multilateral donors including the World Bank and the regional development banks, civil society