



Education for All Achieving the Goal



Final report

Mid-Decade Meeting of the
International Consultative Forum
on Education for All

16-19 June 1996, Amman, Jordan



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of the Mid-decade Meeting of
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UNDP



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World Bank



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PREFACE

This report, prepared by the Secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, attempts to present in a structured, thematic manner the principal points discussed at the Mid-decade Meeting of the Forum in Amman, Jordan, 16-19 June 1996. It is based largely on the audio tapes of the plenary sessions and the reports of the four commissions and eight open dialogue sessions drafted by the several participants who accepted to act as rapporteurs. The Secretariat wishes to express its sincere thanks for their cooperation.

Since certain issues were discussed in more than one session and from different perspectives, the present report attempts to group the ideas expressed and conclusions reached in accordance with the main themes of the plenary sessions and the four commissions. Thus, the report presents a synthesis of the discussions rather than a recording of what was discussed in each individual plenary or group session. Nevertheless, some repetition proved unavoidable in order to treat the broad themes coherently. For the same reason, a minimum of background information from the main working document has been incorporated into certain parts of the text.

The *Amman Affirmation*, the final communiqué adopted by acclamation at the meeting, is presented here in its final form. Although the meeting did not adopt specific recommendations, selected suggestions or proposals that arose in the discussions are presented as "recommendations" in boxes appearing throughout the text.

The reader is invited to share her or his thoughts on any of the points raised in the report by writing to the Secretariat. Since the distribution of the report is limited, the reader is also invited to share this copy with other interested persons. ■



INTRODUCTION

Six years ago at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, participants from 155 countries pledged to take the necessary steps to provide primary education for all children and to massively reduce illiteracy. An important milestone in the development of education, the Conference was organized in response to the widespread concern over the inadequacy and deterioration of education systems during the 1980s and over the millions of children and adults who remain illiterate and poorly prepared for life in their societies.

Immediately following the Conference, the International Consultative Forum on Education for All was set up as a mechanism to promote and monitor progress towards Education for All (EFA) goals throughout the 1990s. The Forum periodically brings together senior policy-makers and specialists from developing countries, international and bilateral development agencies, and non-governmental organizations and foundations.

Some 250 participants from 73 countries came together in Amman, Jordan, at the Forum's mid-decade meeting to assess the results of the Mid-decade Review of Progress towards Education for All – an ambitious, worldwide exercise that began early in 1995 – and to find ways of overcoming persistent problems and confronting new challenges.

Due to a concerted effort by education ministries, international agencies, researchers and educators, the Forum was presented with a very up-to-date diagnosis of the state of basic education in developing countries at mid-point between Jomtien and the year 2000.

The review process itself showed that there is widespread support for the goals and principles embodied in the *World Declaration on Education for All* and its *Framework for Action*, the texts adopted in Jomtien six years ago.

"There has been significant progress in basic education, not in all countries nor as much as had been hoped, but progress that is nonetheless real," said the Forum's final communiqué, adopted as *the Amman Affirmation*.

Primary school enrolment has increased: an estimated 50 million more children are enrolled today than in 1990. The number of out-of-school children, which had grown inexorably for decades, is also beginning to decline: today there are 20 million fewer out-of-school children of primary-school age than at the start of the decade.

"Jomtien indeed made a difference," said Mr Federico Mayor, UNESCO's Director-General, speaking on behalf of UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, the conveners of the Forum. "Despite the economic crises affecting so many countries in the '90s, the downward trend of falling enrolments that we witnessed during the '80s has been reversed."

But, the discussions revealed that much remains to be done if the goals are to be achieved. In the words of Ms Helen Stills, president of the Jamaica Teachers Association: "We are on the right track, guys, but let's do it a little faster." ■



THE A

Education is empowerment. It is the key to establishing and reinforcing democracy, to development which is both sustainable and humane and to peace founded upon mutual respect and social justice. Indeed, in a world in which creativity and knowledge play an ever greater role, the right to education is nothing less than the right to participate in the life of the modern world.

Aware of the power and potential of education, the international community committed itself at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, to meet the basic learning needs of every individual. In major conferences since Jomtien, the nations of the world have repeatedly endorsed the central importance of basic education in all aspects of the development process: preserving the environment, managing population growth, combating poverty, promoting social development and creating equality between the sexes. We have now met in Amman, Jordan, at the gracious invitation of His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal, to review progress toward the goals set in Jomtien and, of even greater importance, to find ways of overcoming persistent problems



AMMAN

GAINS ACHIEVED

In the six years since the adoption of the World Declaration on Education for All, there has been significant progress in basic education, not in all countries nor as much as had been hoped, but progress that is nonetheless real. Primary school enrolment has increased, an estimated fifty million more children are enrolled today than in 1990. The number of out-of-school children, which had grown inexorably for decades, is also beginning to decline. There are today 20 million fewer out-of-school children of primary-school age than at the start of the decade. This progress is the result of concerted efforts by governments and peoples to extend educational opportunities. New partnerships have emerged, new resources have been tapped and new energies and ideas have been devoted to making education for all a reality.

Accompanying these quantitative gains has been a growing emphasis on the quality of education. Without educational content relevant to current needs, without preparation in the learning skills and new knowledge required for the future, and without efforts to improve learning achievement, access may neither serve the purposes intended nor provide the benefits expected. Fortunately, serious reflection, more rigorous planning and a spirit of innovation have prepared the ground in many countries for important educational advances in the years ahead.

We acknowledge the forces of progress at work in all parts of the world: the new dynamism with which Africa is struggling, in difficult circumstances, to reverse the negative trends of the last ten years; the valiant efforts of South Asia to bring basic education

to hundreds of millions of people; the increasing political support being given to EFA in the Arab States, which is increasingly perceived as the best preparation for meeting the challenges and uncertainties of the future; and the measures taken in other regions of the world to protect, sustain and enhance the gains that have been made since the Jomtien Conference.

SHORTFALLS

Yet, if the achievements of the last six years give reason for optimism, they provide no room for complacency. Continued progress requires even more forceful and concerted action, based on good information, sound research and careful analysis and aimed at achieving clearly specified results.

No point was more stressed in Jomtien than the urgent need to close the gender gap in education, both as a matter of simple equity and as the most effective means for responding to demographic pressures and promoting development. Yet, progress towards this goal has been excruciatingly slow; much more must be done.

The expanded vision of basic education espoused in Jomtien has often been reduced to a simple emphasis upon putting more children into school: an essential step, but only one of many measures needed to achieve EFA.

Early childhood care and development, with its enormous potential and distinctive role in promoting the active learning capacities and the overall well-being and development of children, while receiving greatly increased attention, nonetheless remains seriously under-developed and under-supported in many countries.

▷▷▷



▷▷▷ *This lack of support applies as well to out-of-school literacy and education programmes for adolescents and adults. There are some 900 million adult illiterates in the world, nearly two-thirds of them women. In all societies, the best predictor of the learning achievement of children is the education and literacy level of their parents. Investments in adult education and literacy are, thus, investments in the education of entire families.*

There has also been a tendency to focus on basic education without recognizing its essential links to secondary and higher education, as well as to teacher training and the development of technical and vocational skills. The World Declaration on Education for All was intended to empower, not to limit – to propose minimums, but not to set ceilings.

THE ROAD AHEAD

As we look to the end of the century and beyond, the leadership in each country must assume the responsibility for accelerating progress towards EFA, setting firm targets and timetables for achieving them.

International agencies and donors must also play their full role as partners in the EFA movement, matching national efforts with significantly increased international support, improved co-ordination and greater responsiveness to country priorities.

All EFA partners must learn how to mobilize new resources as well as how to use existing resources more effectively. In the quest for EFA, enhanced political will, greater financial and material resources and improved management are all essential.

EMERGING CHALLENGES

In the light of the developments of the past six years, it has become essential to re-examine goals and add new areas and means of action to those set forth in the Jomtien vision:

- ▶ *Given the trend toward more open societies and global economies, we must emphasize the forms of learning and critical thinking that enable individuals to understand changing environments, create new knowledge and shape their own destinies. We must respond to new challenges by promoting learning in all aspects of life, through all the institutions of society, in effect, creating environments in which living is learning.*
- ▶ *Given the growing recognition and reality of multicultural and diverse societies, we must respond by including local content as well as cross-cultural learning in basic education and by acknowledging the essential role of the mother tongue for initial instruction.*
- ▶ *Given escalating violence caused by growing ethnic tensions and other sources of conflict, we must respond by ensuring that education reinforces mutual respect, social cohesion and democratic governance. We must learn how to use education to prevent conflict and, where crises do occur, ensure that education is among the first responses, thereby contributing to hope, stability and the healing of the wounds of conflict.*
- ▶ *Given debt burdens, restrictions on social expenditures and continuing wasteful expenditure on weapons of war, we must respond with measures to reduce debt burdens, including the transformation of liabilities into assets through debt swaps, policies that promote investments in a nation's people and future, and reforms to the international economic system that give poor countries a chance to earn their way in the world.*



- ▶ *Given rapidly growing numbers of youth at risk, often alienated from society and facing unemployment, we must seek ways to make education more responsive, both to the immediate realities facing these youth, as well as to the changing realities of a world in which basic learning skills are ever more important.*

CONTINUING CHALLENGES

Even as we focus our attention on these new realities and challenges, we must persist in our efforts to meet the goals set forth in the World Declaration on Education for All:

- ▶ *The priority of priorities must continue to be the education of women and girls. Successful approaches and programmes must be identified in order that they may be replicated and expanded. There can be no enduring success in basic education until the gender gap is closed.*
- ▶ *The training, status and motivation of teachers continues to be at the very core of educational concerns. While we must make better and wider use of technology and media, they can complement, but never replace the essential role of the teacher as the organizer of the instructional process and as a guide and example to the young.*
- ▶ *The full vision of EFA, that of a learning society, recognizes the role of parents, families and communities as the child's first teachers. Both learning and teaching begin at birth and continue throughout life, as individuals work, live and communicate ideas and values by word and example.*
- ▶ *EFA can only be achieved through a broad partnership united by a shared purpose. It is essential to sustain the spirit of partnership and to broaden it to include all elements of society: parliaments,*

religious bodies, voluntary and community groups, the business sector, the media and others. EFA was founded on a faith in partnerships and a belief that, in a shrinking world, we are destined to share fully in the successes as well as the setbacks of other peoples and countries. In the quest to achieve EFA, it is essential that we sustain and enhance this spirit of solidarity.

- ▶ *The efficient and effective use of resources continues to be essential to the progress of EFA. We must seek more efficient management of education systems, make more effective use of partnerships, draw more systematically upon research and experimentation, and develop reliable information and assessment systems.*
- ▶ *The right to education has been powerfully reaffirmed by the near-universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Yet, there are still over 100 million children without access to education. We must respond urgently with new approaches and strategies capable of bringing quality education within the reach of all, including the poor, the remote and those with special educational needs. This calls for a comprehensive effort tailored to the needs of specific populations and based upon the best available expertise and technology.*

RENEWING THE PLEDGE

Six years ago, at Jomtien, the international community agreed upon the necessity and the possibility of achieving Education for All. Today, we, the participants in the Mid-decade Review of EFA, reflecting on the experience and knowledge gained during the intervening years, reaffirm that necessity and possibility and re-dedicate ourselves to the essential task of bringing the benefits of education to all. ■



THE PROCEEDINGS

The four-day Forum meeting in Amman was unique in that the 250 participants from 73 countries were invited in their personal capacity rather than as officials speaking on behalf of a certain government or organization.

Some 25 education ministers and deputy ministers rolled up their sleeves and worked alongside various specialists, practitioners, researchers and officials of multilateral and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations from around the world in lively and open discussions in the plenaries, the commissions, the working groups, and in the corridors.

The meeting was divided into plenary panels, four commissions, each with its own broad theme, and eight "open dialogue sessions" focusing on a particular aspect or set of problems of basic education.

On Sunday morning, 16 June, the meeting was opened by the acting prime minister of Jordan, Mr Abdullah Al-Nsour, who spoke on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein. The director-general of UNESCO, Mr Federico Mayor, gave the keynote address on behalf of the conveners, and Mr Victor Ordonez, official spokesperson of the Forum, made a computerized audio-visual presentation on the situation of basic education in the world today and the challenges ahead.



The afternoon session began with short statements from six designated "voices of the regions" each conveying a set of messages from the regional policy review seminars that preceded the Forum meeting. Thereafter, the four commissions began their work, each focussing on one of the main challenges identified during the Mid-decade Review exercise

- ▶ Improving learning achievement;
- ▶ Resources and partnerships for EFA
- ▶ Building capacities to provide basic education
- ▶ Meeting the basic learning needs of all.

The commissions continued their debates on Monday morning, 17 June, followed in the afternoon by a unique "grassroots panel" in which four children and youths, a rural teacher, and a neo-literate woman spoke passionately of their personal experiences with basic education (see box page 19). The panel was chaired by Ms In'am Mufti, advisor to Queen Noor of Jordan and president of the executive committee of the Noor Al-Husein Foundation, and was moderated by Mr Saad Labib El-Mekkawi, an Egyptian media personality. The afternoon ended with a plenary session entitled "Shaping basic education for the 21st century". Chaired by Ms Nafis Sadik, executive director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), this session drew together the conclusions and proposals of the four Commissions that could shape the development of basic education into the next century.

All of Tuesday, 18 June, was taken up with eight open dialogue sessions, which gave participants an opportunity to speak frankly and informally on the following issues

- ▶ Working together to develop basic education: governments and external partners;
- ▶ Delivering basic education in situations of crisis and transition;
- ▶ Building partnerships between government and civil society for the provision of basic education;
- ▶ Promoting basic education for girls and women;
- ▶ Developing learning skills in early childhood;
- ▶ Enhancing the role of the teacher for quality basic education;
- ▶ Applying educational research for better learning; and
- ▶ Meeting basic learning needs of youth and adults.

Wednesday, 19 June, began with a plenary session, chaired by Armeane Choksi, vice-president of the World Bank, in which eminent personalities gave their personal views on the policy issues that need to be resolved in order to speed up progress towards EFA goals. At the closing session in the afternoon, chaired by Mr Colin N. Power, assistant director-general of UNESCO, the final communiqué, *the Amman Affirmation*, was presented by the drafting committee and adopted by acclamation. The closing speeches were given by Richard Jolly, special adviser to the administrator of UNDP, speaking on behalf of the conveners, and Mr Munthir Al-Masri, minister of education of Jordan, speaking for the host country. A vote of thanks was proposed by Ms Aicha Bah Diallo, minister of education of Guinea. ■



EDUCATION FOR ALL: ASSESSING THE BALANCE SHEET

One of the main objectives of the Forum's Mid-decade Meeting was to assess how well governments, donors and other partners have lived up, during the last six years, to the commitment to work towards the goals of Education for All. The main conclusion of the Forum can perhaps best be summed up by the words of Mr Richard Jolly, special adviser to the administrator of UNDP: "If Jomtien was the turning point and 1990 to 1995 the years of recovery, Jordan must now mark the point of acceleration."

In his keynote address, Mr Federico Mayor, director-general of UNESCO, outlined the progress made and challenges ahead. Speaking on behalf of the conveners, he observed that "the results of the Mid-decade Review... show that there has been definite progress in basic education. Not in every country, certainly not as much as we had hoped, but significant steps have been taken towards the goal of Education for All."

Mr Mayor said that primary enrolments in 80 per cent of the developing countries have been steadily growing since 1990, which is "perhaps the single most positive feature of the balance sheet."

Between 1990 and 1995, enrolment in all developing countries grew by 50 million pupils, at double the pace in the 1980s. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa enrolled the most additional pupils — a combined total of some 33 million. "That is quite an achievement," commented Mr Mayor. "The first half of the 1990s has proved to be a period of educational recovery."



Net enrolment ratios (NERs) — the proportion of the official primary school-age group actually attending school — also reflect these positive developments. NERs have risen in all developing regions, ranging from 60 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to almost 90 per cent in Latin America and East Asia.

Whereas projections based on enrolment trends in the 1980s showed the number of out-of-school children growing to 148 million by the year 2000, the number of out-of-school children is actually declining, from 128 million in 1990 to 110 million in 1995.

Other positive news concerns early childhood development, where reported enrolments have grown to an estimated 56 million children, or one out of five between 3 and 6 years of age.

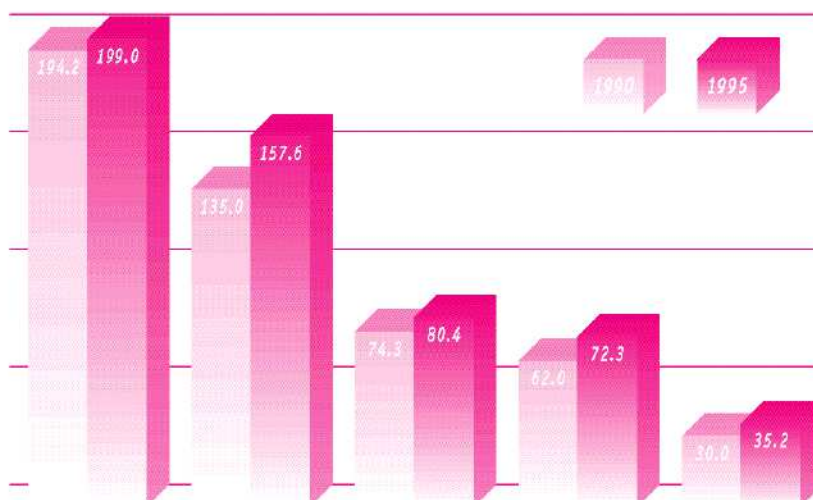
Mr Mayor credited the millions of children, adult learners, parents and teachers who “despite great difficulties have consistently demonstrated their faith in education. Despite low self esteem, economic difficulties, and poor quality of education, there is a tremendous belief out there that education matters.”

Nevertheless, Mr Mayor said that not enough is being done to reach the millions of children still out of school. It is “simply unacceptable,” he said, that in Africa the number of out-of-school children in the 6-to-11 years age-group grew by some 2 million since 1990, totalling 39.3 million, and two-thirds of them are girls. “The most important thing we can do for these children — who lack most other things — is to provide them with basic education adapted to their specific needs. It is their right, and it is our duty.”

He also called attention to the deteriorating status and working conditions of teachers who work in “overcrowded classrooms, for inadequate pay.” He mentioned a recent meeting organized by the International Labour Organization on the impact of structural adjustment on teachers, and said that currency devaluations and the freezing of salaries “force many teachers to take up a second job or leave the profession altogether.”

On the issue of educational quality, Mr Mayor said that “we are not doing enough to make sure that the children who do manage to get a place in school actually learn something useful.”

TOTAL ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION 1990-1995



In 80 per cent of the developing countries, primary education enrolments have been growing since 1990; this is perhaps the most positive and significant feature of the mid-decade balance sheet. Between 1990 and 1995, enrolments in all developing countries together grew by 50 million pupils, at double the pace observed in the 1980s. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are the two regions that enrolled the most additional pupils since 1990: a combined total of some 33 million.



The quality of the education they receive is often of an unacceptably low level, and most developing countries still lack the capacity to monitor learning in the classroom. The major problem that needs to be tackled in the years to come, he said, is that of repetition and drop-out "which is not only a tremendous waste of public resources, but also a tragic waste of talent and morale among the learners."

Gender disparities are still the main constraints to achieving Education for All. Two-thirds of the world's illiterate adults, 565 million, are women. "A society which fails to care for the education of its daughters, handicaps its future," said Mr Mayor.

He went on to say that the world community has not done enough to provide literacy and non-formal skills training for young people and adults. Consequently, the absolute number of illiterate adults, estimated at around 885 million today, has not changed since 1990.

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE

So what are the main challenges ahead? Participants agreed that action on all fronts must be accelerated, and several speakers, commissions and open dialogue sessions identified core priorities for action, summarized in the final communiqué.

1 COUNTRIES THAT HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (UPE) MUST SPEED UP THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE IT.

The Forum noted that some 30 developing countries have achieved net enrolment ratios of 95 per cent or more, another 40 or so stand between 80 and 95 per cent, while some 60 countries are below the 80 per cent mark. Mr Jolly, in his closing remarks, outlined the kinds of action needed by these groups of countries. Those that are close to full enrolment will need to intensify efforts to raise the quality and relevance of education, while those that have NERs between 80 to 95 per cent should ensure that all children "enter school and

complete a basic cycle of learning of at least a minimum quality... so that they can get a start on the basic life-time skills." For those countries with a NER below 80 per cent — and especially those with NERs below 50 per cent — achieving UPE "represents one of the world's biggest challenges on the eve of the next century" — and requires a massive commitment, first by the nations concerned, but also by the international community, including donors and NGOs.

2 THE GENDER GAP MUST BE CLOSED.

Despite the solemn commitments of world leaders to invest more in educating women and girls, and despite all the research indicating the tremendous benefits to society of such investment, this seems to be the area where least progress has been made. The ratio of girls to boys enrolled, the relative rates of drop-out and of continuation to higher levels of education, all of which are generally to the disadvantage of girls, have continued with little change. "It is astounding to see the impact of educating girls on all other development areas," said Ms Emily Vargas-Baron, deputy assistant administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). "This is not a feminist issue, it is a development issue." Her words were echoed by Mr Armeane Choksi, vice-president of the World Bank. "There has been lots of talk and rhetoric on girls' education, but not a lot of action." He said that the Bank will be lending US\$2.5 billion a year over the next five years to education, and 60 per cent will go to girls' education. The Forum called for a substantial increase of new funds, as well as better use of existing funds, for the education of girls and women.

3 COUNTRIES MUST RAISE THE QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF SCHOOLING, STRENGTHEN THE TEACHING FORCE AND IMPROVE THE TEACHING PROCESS TO BOOST LEARNING.

Many countries have embarked on new initiatives to improve the quality and relevance of learning. For example, by shifting resources from the military to the education sector, Costa Rica has equipped half of its



primary schools with computers, which are also available to adults in the evenings. But in too many countries, rich and poor alike, the quality of the education offered is often of an unacceptably low level, leading to high repetition and drop-out rates, especially in poor rural and urban communities. Concerns about and relevance quality were also raised in the discussions about literacy and other basic education programmes for out-of-school children, youth, and adults. Mr Al-Masri, Jordan's minister of education, stressed that education must prepare learners for employment. The Forum agreed that all measures to improve educational quality must give proper attention to the role of the teacher. "While we must make increasing use of new technologies and media, these complement but never replace the essential role of the teacher as instructor, guide and example for the young," said the final communiqué. Hence, the Forum called for more and better training of teachers, and more efforts to boost their status and morale.

4 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT NEEDS MUCH MORE ATTENTION AND RESOURCES.

Many participants stressed the crucial role of early childhood care and development. While there has been some progress in this area since 1990, "figures don't always match reality on the ground," according to one

expert. The Forum noted that even modest but well-designed activities for young children, when their learning curve is steepest, can produce important benefits in their overall development.

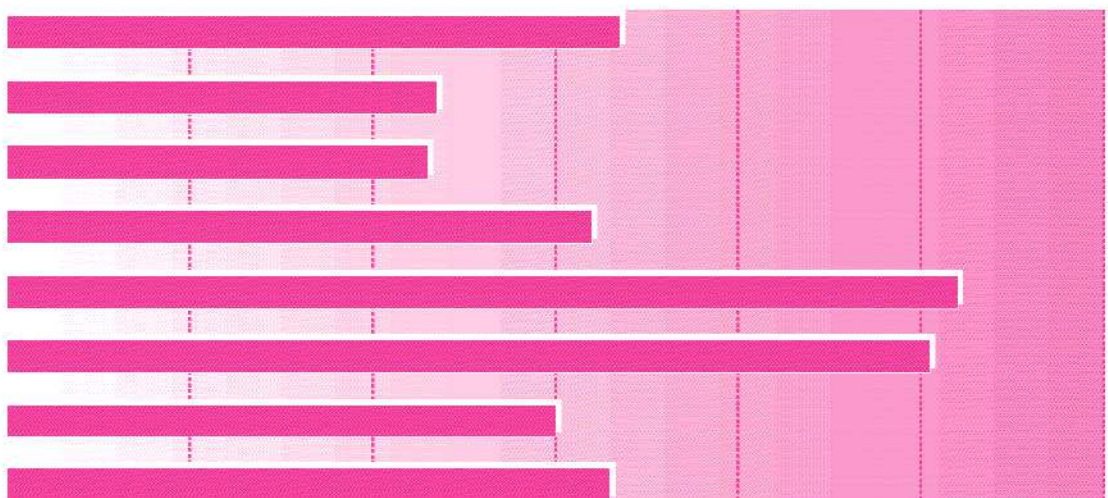
5 MUCH MORE ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO LITERACY AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS.

During the Forum's commissions and open dialogue sessions, it became evident that while there has been progress in primary school enrolments, the unschooled and illiterate youths and adults are still largely forgotten. Of the 885 million adult illiterates in the world, nearly two-thirds of them are women. The Forum stressed the particular importance of educating parents. "Throughout the world, the best predictor of the learning achievement of children is the education and literacy level of their parents. Investment in adult education and literacy are thus investments in the education of entire families."

6 MORE RESOURCES SHOULD BE ALLOCATED TO BASIC EDUCATION, AND EXISTING RESOURCES SHOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY USED.

During the Mid-decade Review, virtually all countries reported that funding for basic education is inadequate.

EDUCATION FOR ALL ACTIONS IN COUNTRIES



During the Mid-decade Review, over 100 countries reported having taken some follow-up action inspired by the Jomtien Conference.



This was largely echoed at the Forum meeting by participants from developing countries. And despite the mass of research illustrating the high return of investment in basic education, it continues to receive a very small share of most national budgets. Mr Mayor called on all countries to invest at least six per cent of their GNP on education. "The funds exist," he said, "it is now a matter of priorities." But it is also evident that much more can be achieved by better use of existing resources. "Too often", said Mr Jolly, "many of us fail to realize that most of the resources required are already there within the education system, if determined leadership, cost consciousness and ingenuity can be combined to achieve the reallocations and mobilize the additional effort required".

7 THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEEDS TO BUILD NEW ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT THE POORER COUNTRIES THAT ARE COMMITTED TO THE GOALS OF EFA.

While the Mid-decade Review of EFA showed that aggregate donor commitments and disbursements for basic education had risen in relative terms since Jomtien, the Forum called for much more support from donors. Many ways to increase support were mentioned, such as debt reduction for the poorest developing countries. One positive sign is that the donor community, at a high-level meeting in May this year, committed itself to a "vision for the 21st century" with the explicit goal of working with developing countries to reduce absolute poverty by half and achieve universal primary education by the year 2015 at the latest.

But some participants warned that since external funding represents only 2 to 3 per cent of national education budgets, countries should not rely too heavily on donor funds, but rather seek ways to increase their own education budgets. Mr Al-Nsour, the acting prime minister of Jordan, observed that if aggregate spending on arms were reduced even by one per cent, the additional funds needed for universal primary education would be available.

8 COUNTRIES SUFFERING OR EMERGING FROM, OR THREATENED BY, CIVIL STRIFE OR WAR NEED TO BE HELPED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO MAINTAIN OR RECONSTRUCT THEIR EDUCATION SYSTEMS. THE CONTENT OF BASIC EDUCATION SHOULD PROMOTE TOLERANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONFLICT-SOLVING.

Many participants stressed the importance of helping countries in crisis provide their populations with education. Emergency situations, the Forum agreed, should be seen as an opportunity to build on experiences of the past and to take preventive measures to avoid future crisis. One suggestion was for schools to be internationally recognized as "safe havens".

The Forum also advocated a general education that promotes respect among peoples, social cohesion and democracy. "We must learn how to use education to prevent conflict, and when crises do occur, ensure that education is among the first responses, thereby contributing to hope, stability and healing the wounds of conflict," states the final communiqué. ■



LISTENING TO THE GRASSROOTS

“ I wash my clothes on construction sites, take baths in small inns and do my homework under a street lamp”.

I Brandy Natividad, 15, lives on the streets of Manila. He was one of six panelists in “Voices from the grassroots”, a special panel discussion including a number of children, a rural teacher and a neo-literate mother who gave a sobering view of the everyday life of the poor and uneducated.

Brandy's story moved the Forum participants, both because of its sadness and its message of hope. Living on the streets of Manila with his grandfather since the age of one-and-a-half, with only a cardboard box for a bed, Brandy had few opportunities to get an education. The little schooling he had was interrupted due to lack of money, and he started to hang around with friends who taught him to sniff solvent. It was not until he met a street educator from Childhope International, a non-governmental organization, that he returned to school and was able to complete primary education. Today, he is in the first year of high school and is helping Childhope support other youngsters who roam Manila's streets.

Another panelist, Magdalene Motsi, a 46-year-old rural Kenyan woman, spoke about her struggle to attend literacy classes. “My family did not believe I should go to school, instead they wanted me to get married at an early age.”

After having had six children, she enrolled in a literacy class where she spent three years learning to “read, write and manipulate numbers.” She then studied English and joined a regular school, from which she

graduated in 1992. Now an activist for women's literacy in Kenya, she said: “Education makes a great difference; it is a bliss that is not appreciated by everyone.”

Mohammad Ba is a 17-year-old who recently enrolled in literacy classes while still working as a porter in a central market in Dakar, Senegal. He told the participants: “I got to know a youth worker of ENDA Jeunesse Action (a non-governmental organization), who convinced me to join literacy classes at night, after work. Now I can read and write, and I have learnt how to speak French, which helps me earn more.”

A twelve-year-old girl from Jordan, Rawan Mohamed Abu Al-Ruz, spoke about the lack of resources in her school, the unavailability of information in local libraries and the fact that transport from her home to schools entails long walking hours and often late arrivals at school.

Ihtiram Youssef Al-Jabour, 15, another Jordanian school girl, described the pressures early marriage place on girls in school. “I don't intend to marry until after I graduate from university,” she said, earning applause from the audience.

The hardships suffered by teachers in remote areas were highlighted by Luzma Castano, who for many years has been teaching in remote areas in Colombia. She told the Forum how in the past she often had to ride seven hours on horseback in order to reach the mountainous region where she taught, only to see her pupils drop out because they needed to help their parents on farms or in the home. In 1984, Luzma said, all that changed.



THE CHALLENGE OF IMPROVING LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT

The issue of learning achievement was central in Jomtien, and the World Declaration on Education for All called on countries to “define acceptable levels of learning acquisition... and improve and apply systems of assessing learning achievement.”

(Article 4)

In the Forum discussions, it became clear that most developing countries still lack the capacity to monitor what children actually learn in primary school.

The tests that are given generally serve to select pupils for the next grade or level, rather than to point to shortcomings in the learning process. The Forum took a careful look at all the components that can affect learning achievement among children and adults.



LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT: WHAT IS IT?

In order to be able to assess learning achievement, one needs to know: what does it mean? In line with the Jomtien definition of basic learning needs, efforts to assess learning outcomes need to go beyond reading, writing and numeracy, which constitute the usual focus of testing, to examine "life skills", i.e. a learner's ability to cope with issues central to his/her daily life, such as health, hygiene, nutrition, the environment, and civil rights. "We are increasingly coming to the conclusion that there is a basic core of skills that every child should have regardless of the curriculum and the modality in which he or she is educated," said one

participant. But measuring life skills is culture specific and can be difficult, so participants called for more research in this area.

THE RESEARCH GAP

Much more research is needed on learning achievement, inside as well as outside formal schools, and in respect to children as well as youth and adults. It was noted that among the indicators provided in the Forum's documentation, only a few, such as drop-out and repetition, provide some indirect and rough measure of non-learning, but "do not really tell what is actually being taught and learned." Research on learning

APPLYING EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FOR BETTER LEARNING

Recommendations:

Countries need to step up their efforts to collect meaningful data with which the progress towards the Jomtien goals can be monitored faithfully.

Countries should adopt new techniques and strategies to collect, analyse and present disaggregated data. This will support greater local level accountability.

There is a need to improve demographic data since much education analysis is based on percentages and ratios relating to population data; yet the underlying demographic estimates are unverified.

More reporting should be done on the 20:20 guideline from the Social Summit in Copenhagen, indicating proportions of both national and donor commitments to allocate at least 20 per cent of the national budget and aid to the social sectors.

Data on gender disparities are fragile and need to be strengthened.

It would be appropriate to pay more attention to research that involves not only academics but also practitioners, local communities, parent-teacher associations and policy makers.

A key audience and user of research should be education practitioners such as teachers and inspectors. In this way research would become a tool for empowering teachers.

It is not enough for data to be reliable; it is as important that data are useful, within Ministries as well as at school levels.

One should not over-estimate the capacity of policy makers to absorb and use research.

While looking for research that can be rapidly applied, it is important to recognize the importance of basic research that may not be directly useful until much later on.



achievement by sex and socio-economic status was deemed especially necessary, particularly in those countries that have the greatest disparities relating to gender and wealth.

While some research has been done on the impact of mother tongue and home support on learning achievement, the findings are not always brought to the attention of policy-makers. Even when they are, they are not always acted upon. Participants therefore advocated "tighter links" between researchers and policy-makers, as well as educational planners and curriculum developers. By making research results more widely available through databanks and other means, policy-makers and their partners can share and learn from interesting experiences around the globe.

It was pointed out that academic institutions should not assume hegemony over research. Grassroots practitioners, such as teachers and school inspectors, are in direct contact with day-to-day education in many different situations and are often in a better position to collect data and assess needs than researchers based in the cities. "Research could become a tool for empowering teachers and inspectors, allowing them to identify children at risk, develop local curricula, monitor the impact of teaching methods, and be pro-active rather than passive users of unused data." In this respect, it was suggested that aid agencies and other external partners could help "demystify" research by funding a "back-to-basics" approach in research.

THE TEACHER: THE CRITICAL ACTOR

Apart from the individual learner, probably no other person is as important to learning achievement as the teacher. While rapid technological advances and educational reforms call for better and more motivated teachers, their socio-economic situation has deteriorated in recent years, with dramatic salary drops in many countries and a consequent massive exodus of qualified and experienced teachers to better-paid jobs outside education. The Forum identified a number of expectations that society places on teachers today — as professionals, role models, experts in a wide range of areas, substitute parents, and community leaders — and raised two questions: Does society know what it wants? And does it expect too much?

Teachers, for their part, expect to have good training, an adequate salary that is paid on time, teaching aids, greater say in planning and decision-making and social

ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Recommendations:

Teachers, as all other workers, are entitled to a reasonable salary and good conditions of service.

Teachers should be trained to be agents of community development and animators of cultural and extra-curricula activities.

To encourage autonomy and creativity in the classroom, the management and leadership skills of teachers must be developed.

Teachers should be role models, professionals and experts in their subject areas.

All actors in the educational field

should be supported in their efforts to build mutually supportive relationships, especially through the creation of channels for dialogue between teachers and other education stakeholders.

Improving teacher training and introducing a system of registration of qualified teachers can help increase the professionalism of the teaching profession.

The rights of teachers should be protected through a machinery for contractual negotiations between teacher organizations and educational authorities.

A gender balance should be sought in the recruitment of teachers.



recognition and status. Obviously, there is a gap between what is expected by society and by teachers and the often disappointing reality. "In a changing world, real change is needed. Without improvements, schools and teachers will become dysfunctional."

Improving the status, training and motivation of teachers, and thereby the quality of teaching, were at the center of the Forum's deliberations. One participant suggested that special commissions be created in every country to monitor the conditions of teachers. Furthermore, teachers need to be equipped with skills in how to vary teaching methods to meet the different needs of learners. "Education for All is but a token or rhetoric for many children because 'all' is often equated with sameness," said one participant.

Much discussion concerned how to boost girls' learning achievement. It was suggested that teachers' colleges include courses in gender sensitivity and awareness. Competition between boys and girls and their uneven rates of achievement and retention are often based in traditional cultures and norms that affect the way that girls act in the classroom. Some families, for example, do not encourage girls to study at home, then in school they are less willing to raise their hand and be active. The role of the teacher should then be to draw out responses from girls and help boost their self-confidence.

The issue of attracting more people to the profession was also raised, especially in rural and remote areas where it is usually difficult to get qualified personnel. According to an estimate made in 1993, some 4 million *additional* primary teachers will be needed between 1990 and 2000 to achieve universal primary education. But few graduates want to enter the profession due to the poor working conditions and low salaries. One participant suggested that instead of having a national military service, a national "education service" could be introduced to train young people who would then spend one year teaching in school. Others suggested that economic incentives, such as special living allowances or bonus systems, should be given to attract teachers to rural areas.

In addition to greater support for teachers, participants also pointed to the crucial role of the headmaster as supervisor, animator and manager. "Unless we support the headmaster, we will not have schools that function properly," said one participant.

THE MOTHER TONGUE DEBATE

The link between instruction in mother tongue and learning achievement has long been documented. Many countries, such as Benin, Mozambique and Senegal, have introduced teaching in the mother tongue in the early years of schooling and in adult literacy courses to make basic education more accessible and effective. But the issue is not simple. For example, in Pakistan, where there are over 100 local dialects, such a policy would be difficult to implement. The resources required to produce teaching and learning materials in so many languages, the lack of post-literacy materials, and the fact that many of the dialects do not exist in written form, make it "virtually impossible" to teach in all these languages. Other participants mentioned many countries, some of them in the South Pacific, where mother tongue instruction is successfully used. Generally, the Forum recommended mother tongue instruction where possible, but also called for more research in this area.

LEARNING MATERIALS

The lack of good and relevant learning materials was identified as a major obstacle to learning achievement. There was a general feeling that learning materials are too often gender-biased and not adapted to the real life experience of the learners. More stress on key subjects such as cultural history was recommended.

Good materials need to be produced and supplied in sufficient quantities — a costly and difficult task for many developing countries. One promising approach is for education authorities to work with private publishers and distributors to put in place an efficient system



to supply learning materials of good quality at reasonable cost. An interim measure could be to provide training and resource materials for instructional purposes. The participants felt that governments, donors and other partners should give more attention to the provision of learning materials for children and adults as an essential component of any EFA strategy.

LEARNING DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

Integrated programmes in early childhood care and development (ECD) provide a sound foundation for life-long learning. Such programmes have distinctive qualities that differentiate them from other aspects of basic education: they are "pace setters" in education, often built on partnerships between government, non-governmental organizations, communities and parents. Integrated ECD programmes, including parent education, interact with other areas of children's growth such as

health, hygiene and nutrition, and offer a child-centered pedagogy that encourages the ability to learn.

Since 1990, reported enrolments in ECD programmes in developing countries have grown by some 20 per cent, now reaching an estimated 56 million young children, or one out of five in the 3 to 6 age-group. More and more governments are realizing that such programmes can boost the effectiveness of primary education. Recent ECD programmes in the Philippines, Kenya, and Mexico, drawing on assistance from the World Bank and regional development banks, illustrate this point. However, the Forum pointed out that there is still some confusion between the classic notion of pre-school education, which aims to prepare children for primary school, and the more holistic concept of ECD, which encompasses a range of community-based services to young children from birth to 8 years of age and also to their families. "Advocacy efforts have to be sharper and more targeted, bringing home to decision-makers the strengths of ECD in its own right and as an enhancer of other social sector programmes." In this

DEVELOPING LEARNING SKILLS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Recommendations:

Countries must strengthen their capacity to assess young children's abilities and needs, in order to develop a sound policy for the early years.

Advocacy efforts need to be sharper and more targeted, bringing home to decision makers the strength of Early Childhood Development (ECD), the scope of the concept and the different areas in which it can function.

ECD programmes should be systematically linked to capacity-building efforts. Acquiring new skills enhances the confidence of communities and also their capacity to deal with new challenges.

There is a clear need for advocacy efforts at a regional level, similar to the pioneering work carried out by the

international Consultative Group on Early Childhood.

Documentation and dissemination on innovative projects need to be strengthened. There is a wealth of research in the fields of anthropology, developmental psychology, medicine, sociology and education, on the impact of the early years on later growth and development.

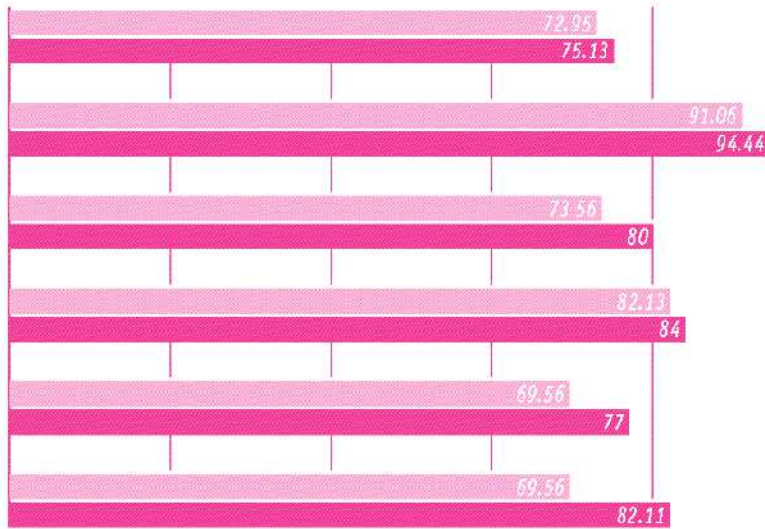
Funding agencies must increase their understanding of the essential place of ECD within basic education and its broader role in the context of community development.

The media should be increasingly mobilized to support ECD by shaping messages in harmony with local traditions.

Local facilitators should be trained to give impetus



PERCENTAGE OF FIRST GRADERS REACHING GRADE FOUR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION (1987-1993)



Drop-out continues to be a major problem in all developing regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia, where less than four out of five children who start Grade 1 reach Grade 4. There has been only a slight improvement in sub-Saharan Africa since 1987, from 72.95 per cent to 75.13 per cent.

1987 1993

regard, documentation and dissemination of innovative projects should be strengthened. Moreover, while the Jomtien Conference and the EFA Summit of Nine High-Population Countries (New Delhi, 1993) created expectations of additional funding for ECD, these have rarely been fulfilled. "With few exceptions, there has not been a great deal of support from bilateral agencies... the need arises to view international resources for ECD through another optic, with less stress on direct funding and more emphasis on enabling local action through technical assistance."

**PARENTS:
 A CHILD'S FIRST TEACHERS**

Many participants stressed the links between learning achievement, the home environment and the educational level of parents. Generally, when parents themselves understand the importance of literacy, they

attach more value to their children's education and encourage them to do well in school. For example, research in the United States in the 1980s on the positive link between parents' education and literacy among children examined a range of family literacy programmes in which parents were given non-formal literacy instruction separately or in parallel classes to their children. The results showed that children's school results shot up. Such programmes have been replicated in Africa and Asia with the same positive results.

However, one participant noted that "just because parents are illiterate, it is wrong to assume that they have nothing to contribute." Illiterate people are not ignorant, and often have important survival skills and traditional knowledge to pass on to their children. Literate or not, it was stressed that parents should be invited to be active partners in their children's education. Teachers often think that parents are part of the problem and not the solution, an assumption that must be changed. ■



RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFA

The Jomtien Conference called for broad partnerships in order to boost basic education both in and out of school. The Conference recognized that education is not the business of governments alone, but should be the concern of all sectors of society, including non-governmental organizations, religious groups, the business sector, the media, donor agencies, local communities, and parents and learners themselves.

As governments seek ways to decentralize responsibility for education, equalize educational opportunities, and raise more funds, they need strong and innovative allies. The Forum noted that greater and more active partnerships have been one of the most successful outcomes since Jomtien.

But building partnerships is easier said than done. The Forum tried to evaluate critically the conditions in which partnerships can thrive and pointed to new directions for their development.



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

One focus in the discussions was the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Jomtien Conference recognized the contribution being made by NGOs to basic education and encouraged them to take more initiatives. While NGOs have focused most of their energies and developed particularly interesting strategies in non-formal education, they have also been instrumental in challenging the limitations of formal schooling and even in redefining national education strategies. Since 1990, NGOs have set up several regional and international networks to promote cooperation in EFA. The umbrella "Education for All Network" has helped establish five regional "sister networks", and UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs on Literacy and EFA serves as a forum for professional dialogue among NGO officials.

The Forum sought to define what is expected by NGOs vis-a-vis governments and other actors. How far can NGOs participate in policy-making, in advocacy, or in financing? Is there not a risk that governments may shrink from their responsibility for educating their people if NGOs become active providers of basic education? Would development agencies see them as "cheap labour?" Generally, it was agreed that NGOs should be taken seriously and fully consulted and integrated into the educational planning process. Thus, for example, NGOs should be invited to participate in planning programmes with external donors. "Although NGOs normally do not administer large budgets, they often have considerable expertise and grass-root level experience that can, and should, be constructively utilized in all stages of project and programme development and implementation." However, it was pointed out that this may not be easy in some countries where there are

thousands of NGOs with varying approaches and agendas, and some of them may not want to work with each other or with the government.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Participants called for more and better understanding of the role of the business community in education. It was agreed that private enterprise should become more involved in education. For example, some employers sponsor or organize skills training for their workers. Some also sponsor pupils who then work for their sponsors for a specific period.

More generally, business representatives should participate actively in designing and implementing basic education strategies, which indirectly, if not directly, will affect business productivity and profits.

THE MEDIA

While Jomtien called for more media involvement in promoting and providing basic education, the working document for the Amman meeting concluded that "the use of media for educational purposes has lived up only modestly to the challenges set forth in the Jomtien declaration." Several countries, such as Brazil, Egypt, China and Mexico, are increasingly using media, especially television, for educational purposes, but in too many countries the potential of the media goes largely untapped.

When discussing the media's coverage of educational issues, one media representative said "Too often people give us only the good news, but they don't tell us when things are going wrong, and reality on the ground might be vastly different than what governments and



UN agencies tell us." He called on the media to be active partners in EFA by "critically assessing what goes on there on the ground" and present educational issues so that they are relevant and important to everyone.

FINDING MORE NATIONAL RESOURCES

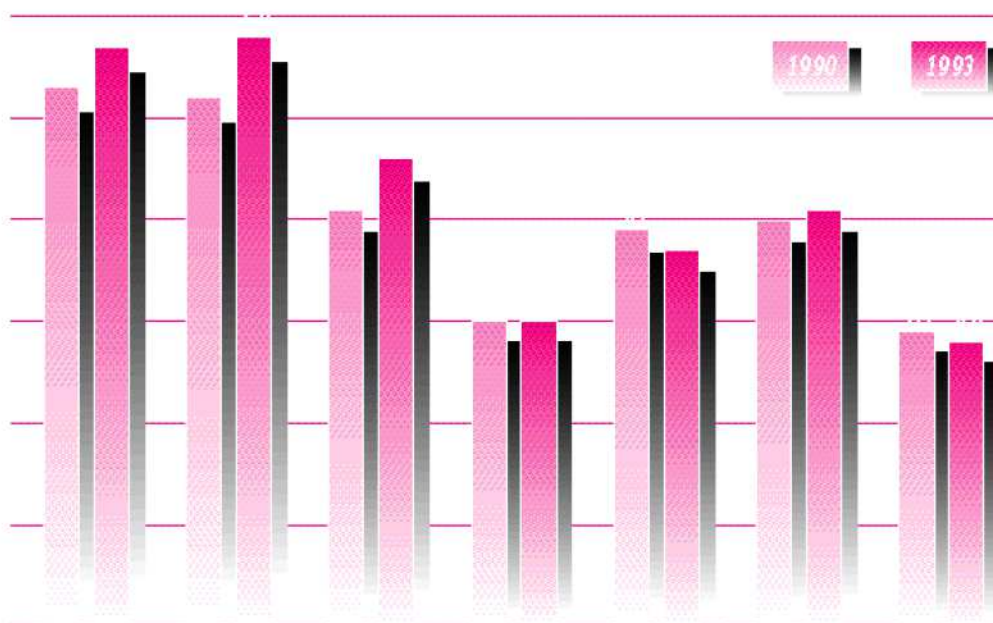
Efforts to expand access to education and improve its quality have placed a heavy burden on national budgets, many of which are already squeezed by debt servicing and structural adjustment. Between 1990 and 1993, all developing regions, except South Asia, saw a rise in educational expenditure as a percentage of GNP. However, the least developed countries fell further behind during this period, devoting, as a group, only 2.8 per cent of GNP to all levels of education in 1993.

Paradoxically, the Mid-decade Review revealed that high levels of educational expenditure do not necessarily go hand in hand with high coverage. For

example, in 1995, primary net enrolment ratios in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States were respectively 60 and 75 per cent, while at the same time these regions spent higher shares of GNP (5.7 and 5.8 per cent respectively) on education than other developing regions that have moved much closer to achieving universal primary education. This raises the issue of how effectively and efficiently resources are used and distributed among the levels of education. Participants stressed that since external funding seems destined to decline, unless changes are made in the way countries finance and manage education, the goal of EFA will remain elusive for many of them.

Many speakers felt that resources need to be reallocated within national budgets to education or within the education budget itself to basic education. However, it was observed that "countries in the developing and developed world are struggling with national debt repayments, and since domestic budgets are already so constrained, the reallocation of resources may be an illusory solution." Some participants warned that there

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF GNP (1990-1993)



Overall, the immediate post-Jomtien years saw a rise of educational expenditure as a percentage of GNP in all developing regions, except South Asia. However, the least developed countries (LDCs) fell further behind during this period: as a group, they devoted only 2.8 per cent of their GNP to education in 1993.



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY FOR THE PROVISION OF BASIC EDUCATION

Recommendations:

The concept of "civil society", should include not only non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but also parents', teachers' and students' associations, employees' unions and community and religious organizations. A broader definition would also include political parties.

The government and State should be seen as partners of civil society, but not part of it.

The mobilization of civil society to support educational goals and expand educational provision to reach all people, should be actively sought.

The potential of civil society to fund and manage social projects, such as education, as well as maintain national cohesion and provide continuity amidst political changes, especially during crises, should be more widely tapped.

The crucial role of the State in piloting educational matters, setting national policy and goals, monitoring quality, determining standards and coordinating efforts at the national, regional and international levels must be seen as central to Education For All activities.

The State should bear full responsibility for providing basic education, as well as establishing the mechanisms of consultation, follow up and evaluation.

Since educational needs are often enormous within countries, partnership and collaboration between civil society and the State should be seen as a necessity, with the flexibility of civil society complementing the bureaucracy of the state.

A harmonious relationship, based on mutual confidence, complementarity and common goals, must be developed. This, it was emphasized, will require a national awareness of EFA and political and popular will.

All efforts must be made to avoid mistrust between the State and civil society through open access to information, accountability, cooperation and participation in the service of education.

The empowering of civil society and the achievement of a global consensus on educational goals must be pursued as essential components for the success of EFA activities.

are limits to the funding that can be reallocated from one level of education to another, because salaries and other running costs are largely fixed. Also, some speakers underlined the potential danger of expanding and improving primary education at the expense of higher education. "Countries cannot hope to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and to modernize if the calibre of their

students and graduates is not high enough to contribute effectively to the industrialization process," said one participant. Stabilizing education budgets was another concern. It was suggested that governments should create a "special fund" that would offer "minimum guarantees of funds to education" regardless of yearly budget debates on funding priorities.



EXTERNAL FUNDING

While the Mid-decade Review showed that aggregate donor commitments and disbursements for basic education have risen in absolute and relative terms since Jomtien, participants were concerned that since overall donor funding is shrinking, this may soon reduce aid to education. Therefore, it is important that basic education be viewed as a key ingredient of all development assistance rather than “just one area among many.” One participant proposed that the poorest countries should get together to create a “lobbying mechanism” to put pressure on donor agencies to provide funding for educational development.

The Forum felt that governments should take the lead to ensure effective, efficient and coordinated use of available resources, but participation and co-ordination of all partners were seen as essential. Whether national authorities, aid agencies or NGOs, all parties should be actively involved in all stages of educational programme development, i.e. drawing up plans, negotiating the use of resources, implementing strategies, and evaluating results. “By actively involving all partners from the outset, it is much more likely that they will all agree to a plan for coordinated and efficient distribution of

responsibilities. These should be clearly reflected in official contractual and signed agreement documents ... mutual trust and clarity of objectives and strategies, as well as readiness to accept the distribution of roles and responsibilities by the partners involved, are basic prerequisites in this regard.” But developing a master plan for education with a range of partners is time-consuming, so national authorities and their partners will have to be patient while putting the necessary procedural and institutional measures in place.

To ensure a programme’s sustainability once external partners withdraw, participants stressed the importance of national capacity building (see next section). The Forum felt that capacity building — developing institutional arrangements and local skills and talent — should be included in all educational support programmes. Here, teacher training and community support were seen as important aspects of capacity building.

Many participants argued that donors need to attach some conditions or requirements to their grants or loans, but others felt that conditionalities interfere with a nation’s sovereign right to decide its own priorities. Whatever the relationship between donors and countries, it was stressed, the relationship must be “equal and well-balanced.” ■



WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP BASIC EDUCATION: GOVERNMENTS AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Recommendations:

It is essential that governments, multi- and bilateral agencies and NGOs coordinate their actions. Host government authorities must play a leading role in ensuring the full, effective and efficient use of scarce resources.

Ministries of education, in their capacity as technical partner, are urged to play an active role in negotiations with donor agencies on development cooperation.

Where relevant, coordination schemes and strategies should allow for NGO participation in order to take advantage of their considerable expertise and grassroots experience.

To ensure effective collaboration, all partners should be involved in educational programme development: from identification to policy formulation, implementation, supervision and evaluation. This should be reflected in contractual and signed agreements which map out a clear distribution of responsibilities.

External donor agencies and NGOs are urged to coordinate their missions to developing countries to avoid overlapping and to help ensure that their human and material resources are effectively utilized.

To ensure the sustainability of a project once external assistance comes to an end, full attention should be given to building the required national capacities, both educational, financial and managerial.

Basic education must be developed as an integral part of the entire education system. Thus, donor supported programmes targeting basic education should systematically address critically important aspects of the system, such



BUILDING NATIONAL CAPACITIES TO PROVIDE BASIC EDUCATION

“Building capacities” is a broad term that refers to institutional arrangements, as well as to skilled professionals, such as teachers, curriculum specialists, textbook authors, librarians, educational broadcasters, planners and managers. The Forum discussions on this theme started from the premise that education systems should meet the basic learning needs of all children, adolescents and adults throughout their lifetime. Participants stressed that too often governments and donors equate EFA with formal primary schooling. As one speaker put it: “If the goal of Education for All is to be reached, it is important not to focus on schools alone, as they will not be able to educate all, especially not in Africa, where schools often fail to take into account the local languages, social cohesion, job-skills, and regional and sub-regional cooperation.”



BUILDING TEACHING CAPACITY

There was general agreement that much needs to be done to enhance capacities of teachers through adequate teacher training, logistical support, just compensation and career opportunities. Teacher education should not only ground teachers in the basics but should also empower them to participate actively in defining basic learning needs and how to meet them. Moreover, pre- and in- service training should prepare teachers to move away from rote learning towards more active and creative learning methods.

Participants also stressed the importance of equipping teacher educators with materials relevant to local needs, culture, and language, so that they can train teachers to use these materials effectively in the classroom. Generally, it was felt that teaching materials should not be imported from other countries, but be locally produced. "Capacity building exercises are only effective if the materials are developed in the countries where they are to be used, otherwise developing countries will never stand on their own," said one speaker.

Another participant described an innovative teacher training programme currently being implemented in nine African countries. Funded and administered by UNESCO, UNICEF, Save the Children and the Bernard van Leer Foundation, it focuses on developing new methods of teacher training. The trainers are encouraged to go into a community and to ask for the views of parents and of community leaders, and then to use these inputs in designing their training course. New teachers are invited to work along similar lines, taking into account the views of the community in which they teach. The project is aimed at empowering teachers to be more responsible and to give them a sense of autonomy. In Burkina Faso, which has suffered from an acute

lack of trained teachers since the late 1980s, plans are now underway to launch a teacher training programme that combines theory with practice. Teachers will receive one year of training in an institute and will then be sent to a classroom where they will teach, under supervision, for an apprenticeship of three years.

The need to train teachers for non-formal education was also highlighted, especially in crisis and conflict situations. There are usually many volunteers who are willing to work in emergency relief or education programmes, but the effectiveness of volunteers could be vastly enhanced if they were given appropriate training. Participants also discussed how teachers in isolated rural areas can be updated on the latest teaching methods and teaching aids. Inter-active distance education has been successfully used for this purpose, but questions were raised regarding costs and sources of financing. Various strategies could be put in place to ensure that teaching in remote areas reaches an acceptable level and is effectively monitored.

THE ESSENTIAL LINKAGES

It was repeatedly emphasized that there should be "linkages" between formal and non-formal basic education, between different governmental departments, and between early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education levels. In this respect one participant pointed to the need to measure the effectiveness of such linkages and for documenting and monitoring data on them.

Partnerships at the national level may need to break out of established organizational patterns "which are often too conservative," one participant said. Effective dialogue and interaction between the bodies responsible for different levels of education, in and out



of the formal system, are needed so that resources can be used more effectively. "The formal school system is becoming a constraint," said one participant, and many others agreed with this view. "The imprisoning division between formal and non-formal education must be broken."

Partnerships at the local level can help ensure more effective and open dialogue. Thus, participants called for broader partnerships between schools and communities and between teachers and their supervisors.

In the discussion about international partnerships, some participants argued in favour of targeting those countries most in need of assistance. Others pointed out that international partnerships already exist, the Amman meeting itself was one example, and that the challenge was to ensure that existing partnerships provide workable solutions to the problems in basic education.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Creating channels for open dialogue between local communities and education authorities was considered essential to achieve Education for All. However, such dialogue is not always easy. "There are few people in government who actually take the time and go into communities to identify innovations," said one participant. Conversely, many community actors, whether individuals or representatives of local groups, such as parent-teacher associations, need training in order to be prepared to participate effectively in educational development.

It was generally felt that schools and teachers must become more open to their surroundings, involving parents in the life and daily and management of the

school. Too many schools are isolated from the local community, and this acts as a disincentive to parents to send their children to school.

Also, the school is not the only center of learning: the extended family, religious organizations, community centers, craftshops, etc. may meet certain basic learning needs quite effectively. "Community involvement seems to have a special role to play in early childhood programmes and primary education," said one participant, because it acts as a motivating factor for parents to enroll their children.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES THROUGH DECENTRALIZATION

The importance of decentralizing decision-making and planning was much discussed. China's decentralization of education was mentioned as one successful example of shared ownership between all levels of government, including village communities. But true decentralization has not been attempted in many developing countries, and it is rare to find systemic decentralization plans. Moreover, giving decision-making power and revenue raising responsibilities to lower levels of government and to community organizations without adequate monitoring and accountability structures, has sometimes yielded negative results. This, said one participant, has led to a "told you so" attitude from some donors, which in turn has made neighboring countries reluctant to try it themselves. So what can be done? The Forum advocated a clearer division of responsibilities between all actors concerned: national and local government, communities and donor agencies. Innovations could include the training of parents in parent/teacher associations (PTAs) to carry out some administrative tasks. ■



MEETING THE BASIC LEARNING NEEDS OF ALL

The Forum noted that despite the progress in expanding primary education during the 1990s, the "All" dimension of the Jomtien vision of Education for All still needs much more attention. There were still some 110 million primary school-age children out of school in 1995, and in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of children without access to primary education is growing. Despite some improvement in girls' enrolments, the percentage of school-age boys enrolled still exceeds that of girls in most regions, and the gender gap in age-specific "net enrolment ratios" actually grew worse in the 1990s, except in the Arab States. Moreover, there has been little progress in providing literacy and life skills education for adolescents and adults. In 1995, developing countries counted an estimated 872 million illiterate youth and adults age 15 and over, of whom nearly two-thirds were women. Unless there is a truly major effort to change this situation, Education for All will remain an illusive goal well into the 21st Century.



NON FORMAL EDUCATION

Nonformal or out-of-school education, once seen as a marginal and second-class alternative to formal schooling, is increasingly seen as a necessary and complementary component of a comprehensive strategy to provide Education for All. In the words of one participant: "Since Jomtien, there has been a change in the mindframe of planners and educators worldwide, which involves a greater appreciation of nonformal delivery systems and the role these can play in achieving EFA targets."

Faced with the shortcomings of the formal school, many countries are trying innovative nonformal strategies to reach out to those whose learning needs are not being met. In Uganda, some out-of-school children and youth whose families are too poor to send their children to school now receive free nonformal basic education three hours per week, and Indonesia is giving "school equivalency credits" to those who have received education outside the formal system.

The absence of bridges and synergies between formal and nonformal education was seen as a major problem, and the Forum recommended that nonformal education should be recognized as an integral part of an education system, rather than a parallel but separate alternative.

How to identify, replicate and adapt successful nonformal approaches was a central theme in the discussions. One participant suggested that information on successful education programmes worldwide be developed into "guidelines" that could be made available for dissemination and duplication. But some participants pointed out that even good "models" often fail to take root in foreign soil, especially if they are imposed without adaptation to the local needs of the new environment. It was generally agreed that more information on successful nonformal programmes would be useful if presented not as complete packages but as "flexible modules."

ADULT EDUCATION

Many participants felt that the strong emphasis given so far to expanding schooling has obscured other dimensions of EFA and particularly its agenda for meeting basic learning needs of people of all ages — needs that evolve over time and tend to become more sophisticated. Even some developing countries spoke of achieving EFA within a few years, apparently confusing EFA with UPE, i.e. universal primary education.

Education of youth and adults merits more attention for many reasons. The immediate applications of new skills and knowledge in the workplace and in the home can lead to significant improvements in productivity, health and the home environment. The positive inter-generational effects of adult education on the education of children constitute another important benefit: educated parents ensure that their children are educated.

In many countries, the fundamental core of adult education is literacy and numeracy, but these very concepts need to be reconsidered. The essential basic literacy and numeracy skills increasingly need to be developed as part of a set of skills that enable the learner to access and utilize information from a variety of sources and continue to acquire new knowledge and skills over a lifetime. Adult education programmes that contribute also to income generation and other development objectives generally prove more effective than those that have a narrow focus on reading, writing and arithmetic.

In view of the growing numbers of alienated and unemployed adolescents and young adults, many with little or no schooling, it was agreed that governments must find ways to provide them basic education that is relevant to their immediate reality and that can equip them to continue learning as their circum-



MEETING BASIC LEARNING NEEDS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS

Recommendations:

Education of youth and adults must be brought back to the development agenda of both policy-makers and funding agencies.

Greater advocacy in this area must be initiated and sustained, coupled with dissemination of evaluation experiences.

Legislation should be put in place to protect and guarantee the education of youths and adults.

Further research and evaluation are needed to identify effective strategies and programmes.

There is a need for further conceptual clarification of literacy, non-formal and adult education.

Adult education and literacy should be linked to development activities and be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the learners. A focus on "customer service" is crucial.

Better strategies are needed to assure linkages between the formal and non-formal sectors.

Trainers and instructors must remember that the pedagogy used for adults may vary from that applied to children in primary schools.

Existing schools should be used after hours, on weekends and holidays for adult education and other cultural activities.

Regional initiatives should be encouraged, because they create broader cohesion and are more attractive to funders than smaller local ones.

Women's learning needs should be seen as development needs and be adaptable to a large number of options and opportunities.

tances evolve. It was pointed out that closer links are needed between training programmes for young people and other measures that can promote employment opportunities.

Adult education is one aspect of EFA that often does, and generally could, benefit from close cooperation between government and other partners, such as NGOs and private enterprise. Several countries have good experiences that could encourage others and inform their efforts to expand learning opportunities for adolescents and adults. Cooperation and the exchange of information between countries should be facilitated at regional and international levels.

SPECIAL FOCUS ON GIRLS AND WOMEN

Despite fine rhetoric in high places, the gender gap is closing very slowly. Girls' share in primary education in developing regions advanced only slightly to reach an average of 45.8 per cent in 1995, against 43.4 per cent five years earlier. "Let's be honest about what educating girls is all about. It's about recognizing the fact that in all our societies there is a systematic discrimination against women," said one participant. Yet, it was pointed out that since Jomtien, there is a much better understanding of the positive links between educating girls and women, on one hand, and family income, health, fertility, child survival, and agricultural productivity on the other. Participants talked about a "new political will" to close the gender gap and urged that



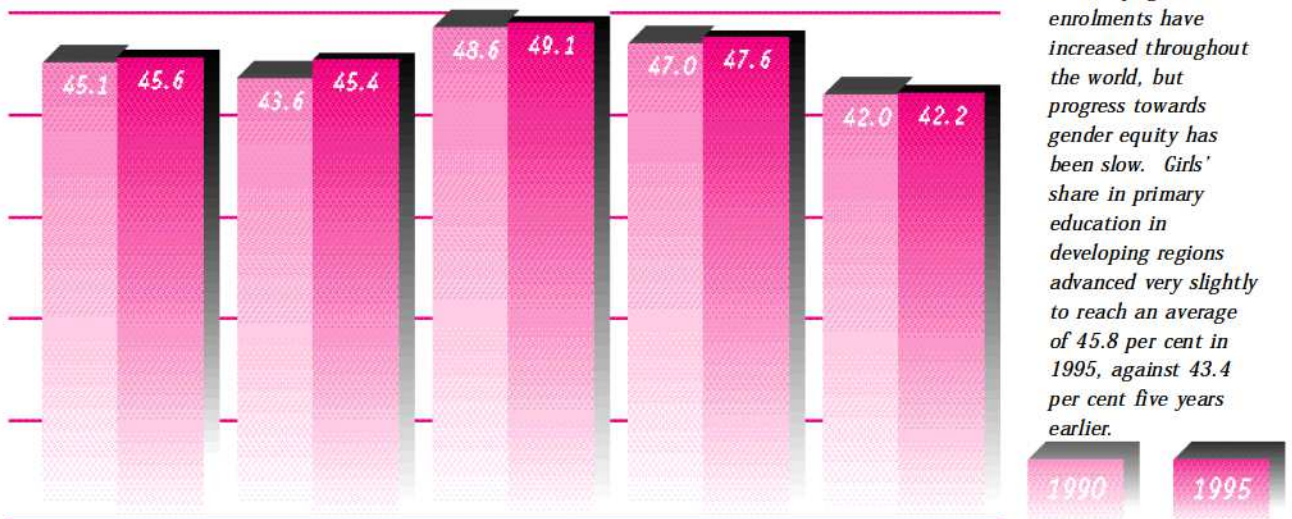
instead of looking only at constraints to educating girls, one should identify pragmatic local solutions that accelerate the enrolment of girls in school.

One positive example mentioned was the experience in Guinea, where the government, in partnership with a range of local actors and external donors, has worked to boost girls' enrolment. An interministerial committee charged with studying the gender gap in education was established. To reduce drop-out, pregnant girls and young mothers are now allowed to continue their studies, and special stipends are given to increase girls' enrolment in math and sciences.

from Arab countries highlighted the importance of a safe school environment that provides practical skills for girls, instead of one that will threaten or intimidate parents because of "radical values being taught there", which may lead to them withdraw girls from school.

Gender-stereotyping in curricula must be avoided in formal as well as nonformal education programmes, participants stressed. Too often, the curricula reflects the dominant cultural attitudes towards girls. Said one participant from an African country: "Images that we find in our books, even in math, are always biased. It is always the women who sell the oranges and the men

PROGRESS TOWARD EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY FOR GIRLS



Another positive development is the founding of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), formed by five education ministers in 1993. FAWE has managed to foster dialogue within governments on how to improve investment in female education and has assisted NGOs to develop knowledge and skills that will enable them to take better action.

When analyzing constraints to female education, participants underlined the importance of understanding local cultures and customs. For example, speakers

who buy. But why not the contrary?" The question whether girls should be given a special curricula, covering subjects that they can easily identify with, was debated. Some participants warned against giving girls and boys separate educations, thereby running the risk of "ghettoizing" girls in the classroom.

Many strategies to boost girls' enrolment were identified, such as using nonformal education, introducing flexible school hours, providing nurseries and child care facilities for the children of young mothers, recrui-



BASIC EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

Recommendations:

Some countries need legislation to make primary schooling compulsory for girls as well as boys, in rural as well as urban areas. But measures to enforce compulsory schooling need to be linked to other measures to persuade families of the benefits of educating their daughters and to remove obstacles that hinder girls' participation.

Those responsible for educational planning, curriculum development and teacher training should seek to remove gender bias from curricula, learning materials, and teacher behaviour. This presupposes gender sensitization at all levels, from policy makers to administrators to teachers and to pupils.

Schools need to become girl-friendly, which above all means a safe learning environment. School timetables should be more flexible and the curriculum should include subjects

of particular interest to girls.

In some communities, cultural practices and sensitivities require flexible solutions, such as separate classes for girls or the presence of adult women as teachers or aides in the school.

Day care facilities for young children can enable young mothers to attend classes. Incentives such as stipends or free school uniforms may boost the attendance of girls.

The media have an important role to play in promoting a positive image of educated girls and women, and in developing an awareness of the contribution they make to the development of society. Such awareness needs to be widespread and channelled into political commitment

ting more female teachers, improving the health and nutrition for girls so that they are better able to learn, abolishing fees and school uniforms, and providing special stipends to encourage girls to go to school. However, participants stressed the need to avoid "quick-fixes" and instead focus on long-term strategies. Food aid, for example, was mentioned as a short-term solution that may create unnecessary dependency: when the food rations stop, there is a risk that parents will take their children out of school.

Many participants also called attention to the tremendous problem of women's illiteracy and argued that adult literacy programmes should target women specifically and respond to their needs.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

During civil strife or wars, schools are often the first targets. Buildings are destroyed along with all the teaching materials contained inside. Even where schools are spared, textbooks and teaching aids are often lacking. In these situations, renovating school buildings, providing temporary classrooms, making learning materials available and serving the needs of refugee or displaced populations become urgent priorities. Participants discussed different types of education projects launched during crisis situations and proven methods of educating when the regular education system and lines of communication break down.

In countries where crises have been declared, many relief operations target immediate needs such as shelter, food and clothing. In recent years, however, bi-lateral donors, NGOs and UN agencies have begun to recognize that education plays an important role in healing social wounds and rehabilitating society. For example, UNICEF and the World Bank have funded teacher training and supplied literacy materials in the Sudan since 1992.



Similarly, in Bosnia, a joint project funded by UNICEF, USAID, the Soros Foundation and the Government of Slovenia ensured that over one million new textbooks were produced and a new curricula developed for the post-war period. In Afghanistan, the BBC World Service, in collaboration with UNESCO, is currently transmitting a radio soap opera - "New Home, New Life", whose episodes carry educational messages and are geared toward improving the quality of life of the Afghan people. With an audience estimated at 80 per cent of the total population, the soap opera is helping to rehabilitate a country ravaged by 20 years of civil war. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge, one of the immediate tasks for the government in Cambodia was to locate and neutralize thousands of mines scattered throughout the countryside. A de-mining unit was established, and the public was informed of potential danger zones through radio and television campaigns.

Emergency situations, the Forum participants agreed, should be seen as an opportunity to build on the experiences of the past and to take preventative measures to avoid future crises. At the global level, this could include the establishment of an early warning system to protect education systems in jeopardy. One suggestion was for schools to be internationally recognized as "safe havens", which should be respected during factional fighting. A donor representative commented that "...one of the greatest challenges is to provide compelling arguments for the importance of education alongside investment in the establishment of democratic societies and long-term economic stability".

With the limited financial resources available, participants stressed the need to introduce projects that serve those most in need, and to identify ways of ensuring that these initiatives are sustainable long after external funding ends. Such approaches, however, should be seen as an interim alternative to formal education and not

a replacement. More priority, it was argued, should be given to strengthening the capacity of civil society to provide education. One participant also called for more focus on peace education and the promotion of democratic values within the curricula. While the discussion centered primarily on conflict situations, it was noted that some forms of "non-conflict crises" may be equally serious. Poverty, one participant noted, is an enduring crisis in most parts of the developing world. ■

DELIVERING BASIC EDUCATION IN SITUATIONS OF CRISIS AND TRANSITION

Recommendations:

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN... BEFORE THE CRISIS:

More information on education in crisis situations is required, particularly on innovative programmes and ways to rebuild education systems to meet the needs of traumatized and displaced groups.

An early warning system should be established to monitor the impact of adverse conditions on education systems.

There is a need to better understand the role that education plays in conflict management and crisis prevention.

Multicultural and peace education should be introduced into school curricula and into literacy training for the armed forces. Classes for the armed forces should cover the impact of anti-personal mines and the effect of these weapons on social and education development.

Legislation should be passed to make it illegal for girls and boys of primary school age to be recruited into the army.

More emphasis should be given to activities at the grassroots level, especially involving parent councils and teachers associations.

...DURING THE CRISIS:

The potential of the media to provide a continuous link between communities and educational processes should be investigated and exploited.

Schools should be classified as "safety zones" which are untouchable during times of conflict and war.

Schools should be used to help distribute food and be



LEARNING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

"Never before in the history of the world have all the nations been really ready to act and work together in support of social investment. Never before have they recognized the very great role that education plays in social and human development."

With these positive words, Ms Nafis Sadik, executive director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), opened the special session on Learning for the 21st Century, which aimed at drawing together the conclusions of the four commissions that could shape the development of basic education into the next century.

Ms Sadik pointed out that since Jomtien, numerous United Nations conferences have emphasized the importance of basic education, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. "These conferences have set the global agenda for the 21st century, which takes people as the focus of all our development efforts. Economic growth is no longer being seen as the only engine of development."

Many speakers stressed the challenge of educating for peace and human rights in a world increasingly beset by ethnic violence and fragmentation, and the responsibility of the international community to protect schools from "critical circumstances" such as economic crises, outside aggression and catastrophes. One speaker observed that "... in Jomtien, it could not



have been foreseen that ethnic violence would erupt in so many countries, that technology would make so many advances, replacing the need for labour in many areas, that the flow of economic and political refugees from poor to rich countries would increase... the role and place of education in this changing world order need to be redefined and articulated." Another participant called for a special clause in national education plans guaranteeing that peace and human rights education be included in all curricula.

Generally, participants stressed that countries should emphasize life-long learning in their education plans, and ensure that education relates to essential dimensions of human development such as health, nutrition, housing etc.

The Forum discussed the role of new information technologies in education and called attention to the widening gap between those countries that are connected to the information super highways and those that are not. Given the communications revolution, what education strategies are needed to close the knowledge gap and to accelerate learning?

Ms Sadik outlined four main "axes" that should be taken into account in developing basic education for the 21st century:

- 1 use an integrated approach, whereby several social services, at the same time, mutually support each other;
- 2 give priority to meeting the basic learning needs of all excluded groups;
- 3 focus on closing the gender gap;
- 4 use resources more efficiently and innovatively.

A second input to the session was a summary of the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, headed by Jacques Delors, former president of the European Commission. The report was intended to rejuvenate the debate on learning and provide decision-makers with fundamental thinking on what education is. The report goes beyond the immediate education community to involve parents, children, business leaders, trade unions and associations. Entitled *Learning: the treasure within*, it outlines four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together.

In a world that is more and more becoming a global village, education is the principal means available to foster harmonious human development and social cohesion, thereby reducing poverty, exclusion, oppression and war. The report advocates the acquisition of a sound general education, learning throughout life, acting creatively in and on one's environment, acquiring an occupational skill, but also more broadly, being able to face rapid social change and work in teams – aspects too often ignored.

Learning to live together, the concept that permeates the whole report, calls for an understanding of others, of their history, their traditions and spirituality, and learning how to manage conflicts in a spirit of respect, mutual understanding and peace. One of the Commission's principal concerns is to reduce academic failure and unemployment by alternating school with work experience. The lines between schooling, working years, and retirement are becoming less well defined. Among the report's recommendations are the allocation of 25 per cent of development aid for education, use of debt-for-education swaps and introduction of new information technologies in all countries. ■



ANNEX I

Keynote Address by Mr Federico Mayor

**Director-General
of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)**

Mr Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Higher Education,
representing His Majesty King Hussein,
Mr Minister of Education,
Distinguished Ministers and Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank, I am honoured to open the Mid-decade Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to His Majesty and to the Jordanian Government for the gracious hospitality extended to us.

This meeting has been called to assess what the international community — countries, donors, non-governmental organizations and other partners — has achieved in basic education since the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. This was a landmark occasion: political leaders, the educational community and representatives of civil society agreed for the first time on a worldwide action plan to provide basic education for all children and massively reduce illiteracy among youth and adults.

But where do we stand, six years after Jomtien? Did the nations of the world, along with the donor community, live up to their commitments? I am happy to announce today that Jomtien has indeed made a difference. The results of the Mid-decade Review of Progress towards Education for All, a worldwide exercise carried out over the last year, show that there has been definite progress in basic education. Not in every country, certainly not as much as we had hoped, but significant steps have been taken towards the goal of Education for All.



A concerted effort by education ministries, international agencies, researchers and educationalists has enabled us to diagnose the state of education in the developing world at the mid-point between Jomtien and the year 2000. This assessment is more complete and up-to-date than ever before, and this is in itself a significant achievement.

First and foremost, primary enrolments in 80 per cent of all developing countries have been steadily growing since 1990. This is perhaps the single most positive and significant feature of the balance sheet. Despite the economic crisis affecting so many of the poorer countries in the '90s, the downward trend of falling enrolments that we witnessed during the '80s has been reversed.

Between 1990 and 1995, enrolment in all developing countries together grew by 50 million pupils, that is to say at double the pace in the '80s. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are the two regions that enrolled the most additional pupils - a combined total of some 33 million. That is quite an achievement. The first half of the 1990s has proved to be a period of educational recovery.

These positive trends are even more encouraging when we look at the proportion of school-age children for whom school places have been provided. The net enrolment ratio - the proportion of the official primary school-age group actually attending school - has risen in all developing regions. Progress ranges from the 60 per cent net enrolment ratio achieved in sub-Saharan Africa to the even higher rates in Latin America and East Asia, which will surpass the 90 per cent mark before the turn of the century.

But what about out-of-school children? Has the world community delivered on its promise to reach out to them? At the time of the Jomtien Conference, assessments indicated that the number of children who did not have a place in school was expected to grow from 128 million to some 148 million by the year 2000. However, our latest data permit a more optimistic assessment: for the first time, the number of out-of-school girls and boys is actually decreasing; it is estimated at some 110 million in 1995 and that number should continue to fall.

There is also positive news about early childhood development, so central for preparing children for life and learning. Since 1990, reported enrolments in early childhood programmes have grown by some 20 per cent, now reaching 56 million young children, or one out of five children between 3 and 6 years of age. Girls make up nearly half of all enrolments. While resources for this expanding area are still insufficient, they now constitute 4 per cent of national education budgets. More attention is also given to children at risk - street children, refugees, war-victims - many of whom have been reached effectively through programmes combining education, health and nutrition. Dedicated non-governmental organizations deserve much of the credit for their commitment and spirit of innovation in striving for the global goal of Education for All.

Following Jomtien, a growing number of donors have also reoriented their policies to give priority to basic education. A survey conducted by UNESCO in 1995 found that aggregate donor commitments and disbursements for basic education had risen in relative terms. Some donor countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, increased their funding to basic education very significantly.



UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, together with UNFPA, have reinforced their partnership and each has increased its support for basic education. The EFA Summit of Nine High Population countries in New Delhi 1993, the most visible initiative across regions since 1990, has been supported jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP. And these same nine countries, I am pleased to report, will be meeting here tomorrow - as they did in Copenhagen in March 1995 on the occasion of the World Summit for Social Development - to reaffirm their commitment and discuss further co-operation and action to achieve Education for All.

All in all, the record is positive, and we should take pride in what has been achieved. But we know that there is still much more to be done to meet the basic learning needs of people in all countries — North and South.

It is clear, for a start, that we are not doing enough to reach the millions of children who still work in the fields or in factories, or who roam the streets in major cities. In Africa, for example, although a growing proportion of children are now enrolled in school, the number of children in the 6 to 11 age-group still out of school grew by some 2 million since 1990, totalling 39.3 million, and two-thirds of them are girls. This is simply unacceptable. The most important thing we can do for these children — who lack most other things — is to provide them with basic education adapted to their specific needs. It is their right, and it is our duty.

We are also not doing enough for the millions of teachers on the front-line of education, too often working in difficult conditions, in overcrowded classrooms, for inadequate pay. A recent meeting organized by the International Labour Organization on the impact of structural adjustment on teachers stressed that currency devaluations and the freezing of salaries force many teachers to take up a second job or leave the profession altogether. In October this year, Ministers of Education from around the world will gather in Geneva at the 45th session of the International Conference of Education to discuss the role of teachers in a changing world. I sincerely hope that this year's focus on teachers will help draw international attention to their deteriorating working conditions, and also help identify solutions.

We are not doing enough to make sure that the children who do manage to get a place in school actually learn something useful. The quality of the education they receive is often of an unacceptably low level, and most developing countries still lack the capacity to monitor learning in the classroom. Repetition and drop-out — which is not only a tremendous waste of public resources, but also a tragic waste of talent and morale among learners — is a major problem that needs to be tackled with determination in the years to come.

We are not doing enough to close the gender gap. Despite the solemn declarations by world leaders to invest in women and girls, gender disparities are still the main constraint to achieving Education for All. There are fewer girls than boys enrolled in schools, and two-third of the world's illiterate adults, 565 million, are women. We have said it many times before, but we must say it again with even greater force: a society which fails to care for the education of its daughters handicaps its future.

Finally, we are not doing enough to provide literacy and non-formal skills training for young people and adults. The absolute number of illiterate adults, is estimated at around 885 million today. Measured against this huge number, the resources devoted to literacy work remain wholly inadequate.



The continuing shortcomings of educational provision worldwide should make us pause before we congratulate ourselves on the progress made in basic education in recent years. Such credit as is due should really go to the millions of children, adult learners, parents and teachers who, despite great difficulties, have consistently demonstrated their faith in education. Paolo Freire has said that "so often do the poor hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing, and are incapable of anything that in the end they may become convinced of their own unfitness..." Yet the positive educational balance-sheet we bring to this Conference tells us that, despite low self-esteem, economic difficulties and poor quality of education, there is a tremendous belief out there that education matters. It is this faith on the part of learners that underpins the educational recovery we are witnessing.

Tomorrow afternoon we will meet some of those children, men and women who have demonstrated this strong belief in education. I am extremely happy that these "voices from the grassroots" have agreed to be with us and share in our dialogue. After all, education is not the business only of ministers, specialists, UN experts, donor representatives, or educational officials. Education involves a true partnership between educators, children, youths, and adult learners, parents and teachers. We need to listen to their concerns. And we need to match their determination and faith in education — education for all, by all and with all. Yes, education is a fundamental right and all the social actors must guarantee the full exercise of this right, including the Parliaments, municipalities, churches and armed forces.

What can and should be done, then, to accelerate and strengthen progress towards our goals? I would like to point to six areas that need your close attention not only during the next three days, but, crucially, during the years to come.

First, the "expanded vision of Jomtien" must find more effective expression in both policy and practice. We need to move beyond the confines of the classroom and reach those whose right to education is being denied. We have to provide learning opportunities for all, regardless of age, geographical location, and socio-economic status. Meeting the real and diverse learning needs of these learners will not be possible through a "more of the same" approach. Education for All can only be achieved if we put into place a genuine system of "Learning without Frontiers". The opportunity to learn must be available to everybody, at any time, anywhere, at any age and in any circumstance. And technology — while no panacea — can help overcome the barriers of conventional schooling and contribute to a system of lifelong open learning. To include the excluded, we must reach the yet unreached: radio broadcasts, audio-visual aids, interactive CD-Roms must become available to all, including those living in remote human settlements. Today, we must be at the forefront of the information super highways. But we must also be active along the byways — in the 600,000 villages in the world without electricity, which must be provided with the latest advances in solar or other renewable forms of energy.

Second, more resources must be found for basic education, and they need to be better used. Several of the least developed countries spend more than five per cent of their national budgets on education, and yet only manage to reach a fraction of school-age children, despite this proportionally large investment. Many of the poorest countries, especially those emerging from civil wars, will need far more support from the international community.



The far-reaching political changes that have taken place since Jomtien — the end of the Cold War, the peace process in the Middle East, and the spread of democracy in South Africa and many other countries — have opened windows of opportunity. Yet we often hear that public funding for education is limited by the scarcity of State resources. Is it really so? Or is it also a matter of choice? At the 1993 Education for All Summit of Nine High Population Countries, Mahbub ul Haq, Director of UNDP's Human Development Report, stated: "Let us not forget that the cost of each jet fighter equals one million children in primary school. If only the leaders of the nine summit countries would commit themselves today that in the next seven years, they will buy only 75 fewer jets, the targets of basic education for all would be met." The choice is ours to make.

Recently, I published with the President of the World Bank and the Executive Heads of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA an article in the International Herald Tribune entitled: "Education: the best investment". If by the year 2000, all the countries in the world could invest from their own budget at least six per cent of GNP, the start of the new century would really be a turning point. The funds exist; it is now a matter of priorities. The threats are different from those prevailing during the Cold War. All armaments of mass destruction must be now banned as well as perverse devices as such as anti-personnel mines. The military industry will in the next years undergo profound transformations in order to help address worldwide challenges such as the provision of urban transport, water systems, etc. We need stable democracies and the armed forces must defend the rule of law, freedom and human rights. But we need the peace dividend to develop human resources and to forge the attitudes that are indispensable for peace and security. There is only one kind of pedagogy: the pedagogy of example. We cannot offer our children bad examples such as the money laundering that favours drug addiction. We cannot promise peace and development without sharing better and reshaping our national priorities.

Another way to secure funds for education would be through innovative arrangements to ease the crippling debt burden. According to the 1995 Human Development Report, the external debt of developing countries amounted to more than 1.8 trillion US dollars in 1993, and debt service consumed 22 per cent of export earnings. Creditors and debtors must seek imaginative ways to ease these burdens, and in particular to promote debt swaps for education. Another piece of good news is that recently the World Bank has announced its readiness to take special measures to decrease or even eliminate debts in the case of the least developed countries.

Third, the recruitment, training, working conditions and status of teachers must receive a real boost. Special incentives are needed to attract and retain good teachers, especially women and those willing to teach in rural areas. We need to benefit more from the experience of teachers. We must learn to listen to them: they need our advice on the latest technological advances, but the updating of the teachers must be an interactive process with reciprocal benefits.

Fourth, much more must be done to provide adolescents and adults with literacy and life skills, to cope with change and contribute to a sustainable development. My view is that we can progressively use audio-visual technology to promote the intensive learning of skills in their own languages. In this way, they can more easily embark on the literacy process. This is particularly important after civil strife when personalized educational approaches are needed to facilitate social reconstruction and national reconciliation.



Fifth, the quality of teaching and learning, in terms of both content and methods, must be improved to enhance educational achievement. Real learning, not merely enrolment figures, is the true measure of progress. Real learning means to instil in all the principles and values that will allow learners to be themselves, to shape their own destiny, to make their own choices, to safeguard diversity and to live together. This is what it means to build peace.

Sixth and most importantly, much more needs to be done to make education accessible to girls and women. There are many successful experiences that can and must be built on —especially those bringing together decision-makers, community leaders, parents and young girls — to remove gender biases in schools. The barrier is not a technical one: it is much more complex than this. We must eliminate discrimination against women so that all educational opportunities become available to them.

What is being advocated here is much more than education for education's sake. Education is probably the single most effective means to curb population growth, reduce child mortality, eradicate poverty and ensure democracy, peace, and sustainable development. It is important that this message should be conveyed insistently to the world's decision-makers and that they should recognize education for what it is — a key to the achievement of the goals for which the United Nations was created.

This message has in fact found strong endorsement at some of the major UN conferences organized over the last five years: the Earth Summit in Rio, the UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the World Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, and the Women's Conference in Beijing. All reaffirmed education's central role in achieving the goals of justice, equality, development and peace.

Investing in education is investing in people, and as such takes a long time to yield tangible results. That is why strengthening our human resource base will require a sustained effort over several decades. It is time for action. The success of this meeting will not be measured by our resolutions here, but by our actions and achievements in the months and years ahead. I can assure you that the sponsors of the Jomtien Conference, together with our many multilateral and bilateral partners, are ready to play their full part in this effort. All together, with commitment and imagination, we can accelerate our progress towards Education for All and thereby significantly advance the cause of peace, justice, equality and freedom for all. ■



ANNEX II

Education for All: The Vision to be Grasped

Concluding Statement by Mr Richard Jolly, Special Adviser to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

It is my privilege to give this final statement on behalf of the sponsoring agencies. In doing so, let me deliver to you all greetings from Mr. Gus Speth, Administrator of UNDP and his best wishes for your efforts in carrying forward the cause of education for all in every country.

This conference has had three purposes:

- ▶ to reaffirm our commitment to the goals established in Jomtien
- ▶ to review progress towards these goals
- ▶ to find ways of overcoming persistent problems and confronting new challenges

We can be pleased, I believe, that we have made real progress on all three of these fronts. It has been a fascinating and stimulating four days, full of intense interaction. We have all learnt much. On behalf of all of us, may I thank and congratulate all who have helped organize, especially those in Amman, the steering committee, and the UNESCO secretariat, led by Mr Michael Lakin.

And may I thank all of you who have come and by your participation and contributions have helped to make it such a lively and important interchange, in the plenaries, the commissions, the working groups and in the corridors.

But in this final session, our task is not to rest on laurels of the last four days or even the last six years. Now is the moment to summarize our commitments and resolve for the next four years.



WHAT HAVE WE COMMITTED OURSELVES TO DO?

As 250 participants from governments and non-government organizations, from research institutions and universities, from donors agencies and international organisations, covering in total people from some 75 countries from all parts of the world, we have all in the words of the communiqué - re-affirmed our commitment to the goals of Jomtien. We have restated the need and our intention in this communiqué to move forward to fulfilling the goals of Education for All - and to move forward with renewed vision and vigour.

If Jomtien was the turning point and 1990 to 1995 the years of recovery, Jordan must now mark the point of acceleration.

For our discussions have left no doubt about it. Over the last five years, we have done well, but over the next five we must do better. Or, as Helen Stills, President of the Jamaica Teachers Association said she would summarise it when she got back home, "We're on the right track, guys. But let's do it a little faster".

Jomtien, we can now see, was indeed a turning point.

- ▶ It set the goals and laid out an agenda for action.
- ▶ Over 100 countries subsequently set their own EFA goals and developed strategies and plans to achieve them.
- ▶ A large number of countries have expanded enrolments, bringing the goal of EFA substantially nearer in all regions.
- ▶ Beyond the formal school system, an impressive diversity of new approaches to learning are underway, often at a gathering pace and with a new vitality.
- ▶ School enrolments have risen by about 50 million and enrolments in the 6 to 11 year old group by some 70 million.
- ▶ The levels of adult illiteracy have been falling in most parts of the world.
- ▶ Notwithstanding a growth of population of some 50 million in the meantime, the number of 6 to 11 year old children out of school is less by some 20 million today than it was six years ago at the time of JOMTIEN.

The broad record is very impressive, even allowing for the uncertainties and weaknesses of some of the statistical data. And let me add, that all of us need to work to improve the quality and timeliness of the data, especially at country level. But in the meantime, let us not hesitate to welcome the forest which is clearly beginning to grow, through our frustrations over not knowing the precise height of every tree.

All this considerable progress must now encourage us to be bolder. For the task ahead is still immense. Some 60 million additional children will enter the 6 to 11 year old group over the next 5 years. Even if school enrolments continue to expand at their recent impressive rates, the out of school population will still fall by only a further 20 million, and this mostly in China and Asia. By the turn of the century, the out of school population is projected to total some 85 million, coming down but only slowly in south Asia and being unchanged or even slightly rising in Latin America, the Arab States and in sub-Saharan Africa. Clearly we need acceleration if the EFA goal is to be reached.

All of this powerfully demonstrates why we must also work towards a slowing of the rate of population growth. Population growth still adds over ten million each year to the size of the challenge we face. Education and empowerment, especially for girls and for women, is an urgent priority for the next few decades and will help greatly to slow population growth and, in turn, help slow the growth in the costs of education.



SIX PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Our challenge is acceleration. To set rapidly in place the further policies and actions required to achieve quality education for all. The communiqué and the Commission reports identify much of what is needed. Let me here underline six core priorities for action.

First, all countries must take steps to raise the quality of schooling, for ensuring its relevance, for improving learning, for strengthening the teaching force and process.

Here we can draw on some of the other positive developments since Jomtien. Many countries have embarked on new ways to improve the relevance and quality of learning giving us all new examples to learn from. Commission I in this meeting has well summarized some of the specifics and others are documented in the main report and in some of the background papers for this meeting.

I recall my excitement in Costa Rica a few years ago when I visited a primary school with President Arias, to see in practice the pledge he had made to provide computers to half of all primary schools. He had made two conditions: that each school would have a suitable classroom, so the computers could be protected against theft; and that the class room should be open in the evening as well as during school time, so adults could use the computers. I marvelled at this practical example of bringing the frontiers of education to primary students and adults throughout Costa Rica within four years. But how can you afford it I asked? His reply - if you don't spend money on a military, you have enough in hand to afford good education for all. This is the challenge for every country - and a practical example of how saving money on the military bills can produce much of the finance required.

Second, the gender inequalities in access to education and within education need to be rapidly ended - and education for all made a reality for girls and women.

This is the area where in most regions of the world, least progress has been made in the goals of Jomtien. The ratio of girls to boys enrolled, the relative rates of drop out, the relative rates of continuation to higher levels of education have mostly continued with little change. This needs to be made a focus for priority action and accelerated improvement.

And of all the areas of challenge, this is the one which can produce rapid and widespread benefits. There are many examples showing the release of energy which can follow for a school or a village, a township or even a whole country, when girls and women are given opportunities to demonstrate their skills and leadership. As the Vice President of Uganda stated so eloquently this morning, "the literacy of women is absolutely critical for development, indeed for survival".

We have had much rhetoric on girl's and women's education since Jomtien - but not enough action and too little funding. We need a substantial increase of new funds for female education, as well as better use of existing funds.

Third, all countries which have not yet reached the goal of education for all must accelerate the quantitative steps to achieve it.

The latest statistics suggest that some 30 developing countries have achieved net enrolment ratios of 95 per cent or more. Another 40 or so stand between 80 and 95 per cent. And some 60 countries are below 80 per cent, 20 of them below 50 per cent.

Those with the high net primary ratios of 95 or more are almost there - they have mostly achieved the quantitative challenge of primary schooling for all children. Their challenge is quality and relevance in the schools - and all the challenges in the rest of education.



The forty countries with enrolment ratios from 80 to 95 should surely embark rapidly on the actions required to complete the most basic of the Jomtien goals - to ensure that all children enter school and complete a basic cycle of learning, at least of minimum quality. For most of these 40 countries, the challenge is not of first year entry but of finding ways for all children to complete the cycle without dropping out, so that they can at least get a start on the basic lifetime skills. In this respect - and it is only one, though an important one - the goal of education for all is achievable in these forty countries within a few years at most.

The sixty countries with net enrolment ratios below 80 - including a third or so below 50 - face by far the biggest challenge. Indeed, for these countries, achieving the goals of education for all represents one of the world's biggest challenges on the eve of the next century. For to achieve the challenge will take a new level of commitment - from the governments and leaders of these countries, from their people and from the international community, donors, non - governmental organisations and international agencies. The commitment must be initiated by the people of the country concerned. But it is a commitment in the achievement of which, the whole world has a stake.

Fourth, a new sense of priority for basic education must be established to back up these actions with the national resources required.

Some 40 to 60 of the countries which have not yet enrolled all their children have the potential of places and teachers to do this rapidly, provided they allocate their resources better. Their priority is rapidly to undertake this reorganization and restructuring, in order to deliver on the promise of education for all in the next few years.

Our discussions over the last three days have shown - and that wonderful report from UNESCO has shown - that many more countries may be in this position than many people realize. Of course, education requires resources. Of course, many teachers deserve to be paid better and to be given the equipment they require. This we know. But too often many of us fail to realize that most of the resource required are already there within the education system, if determined leadership, cost consciousness and ingenuity can be combined to achieve the reallocations and mobilize the additional effort required.

Zimbabwe in the 1990s showed what could be done, Malawi more recently. Zimbabwe increased its primary enrolments three time in three years, Malawi doubled its enrolments in less than three. But combined expansion with actions to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of basic education. I learnt in this meeting that Guinea transferred nearly 2000 teachers from secondary to primary, thereby enabling primary enrolments to be almost doubled, from a very level to having nearly half the children in school. All countries with sizable proportions, make their children out of school need to explore such options, make plans, take decisions and demonstrate the courage of leadership. And all need to root out the inefficiencies especially to make possible achieving the goal of ensuring at least a basic minimum of quality education for all.

A particular tragedy of the 1980s and the 1990s, is that the insufficient resources and priority for education for all at national level has too often been reinforced by international economic and financial pressures. Yes, education is important but this or some other part of economic and financial reform must come first. Whatever other reforms are necessary, education for all must be part and parcel of them.



In arguing this case with your Minister of Finance, I would offer you all a quotation from the World Bank.

"It is intolerable that, as the world approaches the 21st century, hundreds of millions of people still lack minimally acceptable levels of education, health, and nutrition. Investing in people must therefore be the highest priority for developing countries..."
Armeane Choksi, Vice-President, the World Bank

Fifth, the international community needs to form new alliances in support of poorer and least developed countries truly committed to the goals of education for all.

The vision of Jomtien correctly set this out as a challenge for the world as a whole. The Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly specifies in Article 28 the obligation of the 187 signatory parties to "promote and encourage international co-operation" in supporting poorer countries in achieving access to education for all children - for all children, not just for 80 or 90 per cent as Stephen Lewis said in the first panel session on Sunday. The world community needs to assist just as these countries need to strain every nerve to use their limited resources ever better to achieve these most fundamental goals.

The basis for this has already been laid. In early May this year, the donor community in their high level meeting of DAC committed themselves to a vision for the 21st century, with the explicit goals of working with developing countries to achieve a halving of absolute poverty and primary education for all by the year 2015 at the latest. Countries need to build on this commitment, to form partnerships of long run support, linked to a national plan and strategy for moving to the EFA goals. The 20/20 guideline can also help with this process.

The international agencies also have an important role in this process, by ensuring a priority place for education for all in international support of national efforts to reduce poverty and accelerate human development. New forms of collaboration have recently been agreed and set in motion which can help with this. Four task forces have been set up to bringing together the UN agencies, including the World Bank, in following up the commitments of All the major World Conferences of the last few years. One of the task forces focuses on Basic Services for all, chaired by Nafis Sadik, and covering education for all as well as health for all and reproductive health.

Debt reduction for the poorest and least developed countries needs also to be pursued with new vigour. Debt service payments in most African and least developed countries take a larger share of the public expenditure each year than all forms of education. All who care about education for all need to join the chorus of protest against this distortion of priorities.

Sixth, countries in conflict need to be helped rapidly and creatively to move towards education for all.

Some of our biggest failures in basic education have been in countries in conflict. In many of these countries, enrolment ratios in 1990 were already low. With conflict, chaos and disruption, enrolments have often collapsed. This challenge is far from easy. Some progress is being made, especially as conflict subsides in some of these countries - and as more and more it is realized that schooling for children is part of the solution to conflict, not a luxury to await the return to "normal times".



But as a global community and as individual policy makers, too rarely do we act upon the fact - underlined by Dr. Mayor in his opening address - that conflict prevention is cheaper than conflict control. And it is safer too!

Such are the priorities and commitments. What are the benefits we will reap if these goals are achieved?

Jomtien already recognized many of the benefits to be gained if only we can advance education. Most of us know the arguments - but we need to marshal them more effectively to convince those who hold the purse strings.

The gains to young children in having their minds opened, their curiosities stirred, their confidence and skills enhanced.

The benefits to girls of being true equality in the opportunity and challenge of schooling, and not merely left with frustrated hopes and ambitions. And without education, there is no real basis for empowerment.

The benefits in the form of peace and stability for the whole of society, through helping to build values of understanding and community, and to help break down prejudice and suspicion even in most fraught of circumstances.

Schools at their best can do all this. And education, formal and informal, can open opportunities and prepare the next generation for use of new technologies - so much a part of the world which will face us in the next century.

These benefits, already recognized, have been demonstrated a thousand times over. But research in the last five years has developed yet new evidence documenting the importance of basic education for all.

- ▶ The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century has with fresh vision underlined the fundamental role that education will play in the coming century, identifying four pillars as the foundation of this education and stressing the "universal basic education is an absolute priority".
- ▶ the World Bank's many studies on economic development have once again demonstrated the high returns to basic education, with the highest return of all primary education for girls.
- ▶ UNICEF's latest report has demonstrated the vital importance of education for reducing maternal mortality
- ▶ UNFPA's whole programme and leadership for basic social services for all has identified the central role of education for all and its critical role for ensuring equality and opportunity for women and women's empowerment
- ▶ UNDP's forthcoming Human Development Report 1996 documents the vital importance of education for all and greater equality as the two essential factors for ensuring rapid economic growth and rapid advance in human development. Basic education for all contributes to both - as demonstrated in the historical experience of Japan and the more recent experience of rapid growth in Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and several other successful rapidly growing countries of Asia.

All this we have heard many times - and now we have yet new evidence to prove the case. Must wait another 10, 20 or 20 years for yet further proof before we act? Basic education for all is an essential in modern society, a key step for more rapid advance in all countries, an essential move to ensure greater development and a more just and effective society. If all this is clear, what holds us back.



WHAT HOLDS US BACK?

This question - what holds us back - deserves more attention than usually we give it.

Most of us are genuinely convinced. Many in our governments are convinced - from the highest level of political leadership to the most sober and well-organized of administrators and managers. And we know also that voters the world over give high value to education and good quality education for all their children. All of us as parents know that we would gladly make any sacrifice if only we could ensure a better education for our children.

When we know all this, what is it that holds us back? I believe that political leadership, and perhaps many of us also, though genuinely convinced, get derailed by several subversive arguments and attitudes when we start to follow through.

There are the arguments and pressures of competing priorities. A brilliant study by Myron Weiner has documented the many times this argument was used in Europe in the 19th century and since, to explain why education for all was accepted as a fundamental goal - "but should not be embarked upon just yet" Weiner concludes that the time will never seem ideal. Only when a country embarks on education for all, will education for all start to be achieved.

There is also the argument for making incremental advance but without setting goals. Yes, we must take progress towards education for all but it is unrealistic at the present to set a date and time for its achievement. Of course, we need quality education, but we can't afford it just yet. Of course, it is a shame that many girls do not get to school but it is not realistic to expect it now. Seriously to plan for EFA is just not realistic. We need to realize that such arguments for procrastination rapidly lead to procrastination forever.

We need to build on those national goals and strategies to set realistic dates now for achieving education for all in each country or in each district. Then we must calculate what will be required to achieve this. Once we have set our plan for EFA, we can assess how best to cope with the competing priorities, the mobilization required, the special efforts which will be needed. But as long as we procrastinate on setting the goal, we will procrastinate on its achievement.

A third argument against moving decisively to EFA in the poorer countries relates to the different views and uncertain long run commitments of the international community. Even at Jomtien there was debate about whether or not one should set a date for the goal of education for all. Surely, it was argued, a date could only be set at country level. And of course that is correct. Ultimately, a date for each country can only be set at country level.

But too often, to say this becomes an argument against forthright and focused international action and strong international support for country. Jim Grant himself pleaded at Jomtien for clear goals and a defined timetable for action. This was his legacy to the international community, an example demonstrated by his whole life in his leadership in UNICEF. Only when you set clear goals with a clear timetable is there the basis on which to mobilize, for which to demand support, indeed for which to demand sacrifice.

I plead in the name of Jim Grant therefore that we each go back to our countries, or to our agencies and ask: what will it take to fulfill these commitments to education for all, by which date and with what effort and resources. We must do this country by country. Then we must work, nationally and internationally, towards its achievement.



But we are progressing! This is one major difference from Jomtien in these last few days. In Jomtien we had our hopes for the future but we had the sobering experiences of setbacks in the 1980s. The case for realistic caution was very strong.

The voice of caution is still strong. But now we can build on the evidence of the last five years. In some of the largest countries and in many others we have seen that accelerated advance can succeed. We have proved examples of innovative improvements in the quality of education. We have increasing numbers of countries combining sober economic and financial policies with a restructuring of priorities in order to underpin education advance. And we have more examples of community action contributing to real advance.

Most remarkable of all, but not yet fully grasped or widely known, we have the beginnings of trends and projections for a declining number of illiterates in the world. For the first time in human history, the numbers of those without the ability to read or write is beginning to fall. This is unprecedented, almost certainly since the beginnings of mankind.

Over the course of three millennia, and probably more, the most wise and civilized of our distant forbears have recognized the need to bring education and the skills of reading and writing to an ever larger number of people. The sages of the East, the philosophers of the ancient world, the great reformists of the enlightenment, millions of humble teachers in religious schools have all recognized the need for literacy.

And yet in spite of many centuries of human effort, the number of illiterates in the world has run ahead of the capacity of education and teachers. But for the first time, on the eve of the next millennium, the absolute number of illiterate people in the world is beginning to decline, the number of out of school children is falling, even as our efforts to provide schooling for all expand.

Within our grasp is the capacity to provide education for all. The goals of Jomtien have proved their worth. Let us build on the achievements of the last six years and accelerate them, over the next five and over the next fifteen. For that is what it will take. Let us return to our countries, committed and determined, utterly determined, to do all that is needed to complete the task. Thank you. ■



ANNEX III

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