

2008

EFA Global Monitoring Report

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EFA Global
Monitoring
Report

Education for All by 2015 – Will we make it?

Education for All

Education for All by 2015 Will we make it?

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Education for All by 2015 Will we make it?

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Education for All by 2015
Will we make it?

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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP
Oxford University Press is a department
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It furthers the University's objective of excellence
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Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University
Press in the UK and in certain other countries
Published jointly by the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),
7, place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France, and
Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street,
Oxford OX2 6DP, United Kingdom.

© UNESCO, 2007

First published 2007

Published in 2007 by the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

Graphic design by Sylvaine Baeyens

Layout: Sylvaine Baeyens and Hélène Borel

Maps: Hélène Borel

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Data available

Typeset by UNESCO

Printed on acid-free paper by Rotolito Lombarda SpA

OUP ISBN 978-0-19-953263-6

UNESCO ISBN 978-92-3-104058-0

Foreword

Seven years ago 164 governments, together with partner organizations from around the world, made a collective commitment to dramatically expand educational opportunities for children, youth and adults by 2015.

Participants at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, endorsed a comprehensive vision of education, anchored in human rights, affirming the importance of learning at all ages and emphasizing the need for special measures to reach the poorest, most vulnerable and most disadvantaged groups in society.

This sixth edition of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* assesses the extent to which these commitments are being met. There is clearly a 'Dakar effect', evidence that rallying around common goals can mobilize countries to empower individual lives. Partly because of the abolition of tuition fees, more children are enrolled in school than in 2000, with the sharpest increases in the regions farthest from the goals set in Dakar. Many governments have introduced targeted strategies to reach the poorest households and to encourage girls' schooling. A growing number are conducting national assessments to measure pupils' learning achievement, valuable evidence for improving education quality. Though a recent downturn is cause for concern, aid to basic education has increased rapidly since 2000.

As education systems expand, however, they face more complex and more specific challenges. They must address the increasing number and diversity of student populations by ensuring that all children and youth, regardless of their backgrounds, gain access to a quality education. They must act upon the challenges of our era: rapid urbanization and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the demands of knowledge societies. Any failure to deliver on these obligations breaches our commitment to universal basic education.

We are steering the right course but the years ahead will require unwavering political will to consistently ensure that education from early childhood onwards is a national priority, to engage governments, civil society and the private sector in creative partnerships, and to generate dynamic coordination and support from the international community. Time is of the essence: for the 72 million children out of school, for the one in five adults without basic literacy skills and for the many pupils who leave school without acquiring essential skills and knowledge.

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report* offers an authoritative reference for comparing the experiences of countries, understanding the positive impact of specific policies and recognizing that progress happens when there is political vision and commitment. I urge every development and education stakeholder to use this report as a guide and impetus for bold and sustained action. We cannot afford to fail.



Koichiro Matsuura

Acknowledgements

This Report could not have been prepared without the kind assistance of many people and organizations.

At UNESCO, we are very grateful for the advice and support of individuals, Divisions and Units within the Education Sector and in the field. In particular the International Institute for Educational Planning in Paris and in Buenos Aires, the International Bureau of Education and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, and UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and UNESCO Bangkok provided helpful advice on country-level activities and helped facilitate commissioned studies.

The Report profited enormously from the advice and support of the international Editorial Board and its chair, Ingemar Gustafsson. Consultations on the outline of the Report (online and among UNESCO colleagues) strengthened the report. Comments from the online consultation can be viewed at www.efareport.unesco.org

We are also grateful to the many experts and colleagues who took time to actively participate in a special on-line consultation on the literate environment, which enriched the team's understanding of the different conceptual and monitoring approaches to the literate environment.

The EFA Report depends greatly on the work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Director Hendrik van der Pol, Said Belkachla, Michael Bruneforth, Brian Buffet, Alison Kennedy, Weixin Lu, Patrick Lucas, Adriano Miele, Albert Motivans, John Pacifico, Juan Cruz Persua, José Pessoa, Pascale Ratovondrahona, Ioulia Sementchouk, Said Ould Voffal and their colleagues contributed significantly to this Report, particularly in the preparation of chapter 2 and the statistical tables.

Special thanks to all those who prepared background papers for the Report:

Abdulrahman Al shaer, Rashid Aderinoye, Massimo Amadio, Katy Anis, Caroline Arnold, Ildikó Balazsi, Dennis Banda, Madumita Bandopadhyay, Masooda Bano, Angeline Barrett, Karima Barrow, Kathy Bartlett, Aydagül Batuhan, Claudie Baudino, Hazel Bines, Lyndsay Bird, Rae Blumberg, Gabrielle Bonnet, Teresa Bracho González, Vladimir Briller, Rhona B. Caoli-Rodriguez, Diem Chau Lam, Lisa Chauvet, Roshan Chitrakar, Paul Collier, Marcelo Cortes Neri, Lisa Deyo, Marta Encinas-Martin, Claudia Flores-Moreno, Jude Fransman, Marcela Gajardo, Joseph Goodfriend, R. Govinda, Carolina Guerrero, El Mostafa Hddigui, Nadia Hillard, Wim Hoppers, George Ingram, Timothy D. Ireland, Najwa Andraos Kefayeh, Nestor Lopez, Xin Ma, Ian Macpherson, Tonic Maruatona, Karen McGregor, Katharina Michaelowa, Amit Mitra, Elhadji Ngom, Angela Owusu-Boamong, Francis Owusu-Mensah, Steve Packer, Jeffrey M. Poirer, Emilio Porta Pallais, Abby Riddell, François Robert, Alan Rogers, Pauline Rose, Aisha Sabri, Zia Sabur, Mona Sedval, Amanda Seel, Tammy Shel, Joel D. Sherman, Fary Silateka, Wisanee Siltragool, Kishore Singh, Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Nelly Stromquist, Celia Swann, Chie Takahashi, Erin Tanner, David Theobald, Nhung Truong, Paul Vachon, Nora von Buttlar, Peter Wallet, Anke Weber, Hu Wenbin, Babette Wills, Eric Woods, Aigly Zafeirakou, Jing Zhao and Madeleine Zuniga.

We also thank the Academy for Educational Development's Educational Policy and Data Center, the American Institutes for Research, the Aga Khan Foundation, the Associés en Recherche et Éducation pour le Développement (ARED) and Save the Children UK for facilitating commissioned studies.

We are grateful to Desmond Bermingham and Luc-Charles Gacougnolle in the Fast Track Initiative secretariat, and to Julia Benn, Valérie Gaveau, Cecile Sangare and Simon Scott in OECD/DAC for their continuing support and helpful advice on international cooperation and aid data.

Special thanks to Lene Buchert, Francois Leclercq, Steve Packer and Ramya Subrahmanian for their valuable comments on draft chapters, and to Francois Leclercq for his editorial input.

The production of the Report benefited greatly from the editorial expertise of Rebecca Brite. Wenda McNevin also provided valuable support. We would also like to thank Nino Muños Gomez, Sue Williams, Enzo Fazzino, Agnes Bardon and Stephen Roberts and Ian Denison and his colleagues from the UNESCO Bureau of Public Information. Rudi Swinnen, Jean-Paul Kersuzan and their colleagues from UNESCO's Document Section helped with production of other language versions. Thanks also to Anne Muller, Judith Roca, Lotfi Ben Khelifa, Marc Leibnitz and their colleagues in the UNESCO Education Knowledge Management Services for their valuable support and assistance. Special thanks also to Fouzia Jouot-Bellami, Richard Cadiou, Igor Nuk and Fabienne Kouadio who facilitated the on-line consultation.

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Previous EFA Global Monitoring Reports

2007. Strong foundations – Early childhood care and education
2006. Literacy for life
2005. Education for All – The quality imperative
2003/4. Gender and Education for All – The leap to equality
2002. Education for All – Is the world on track?

Any errors or omissions found subsequent to printing will be corrected in the online version at www.efareport.unesco.org

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Highlights of the EFA Report 2008

Major developments since 2000

- Primary school enrolment rose from 647 million to 688 million worldwide between 1999 and 2005, increasing by 36% in sub-Saharan Africa and 22% in South and West Asia. As a result, the number of out-of-school children declined, with the pace of this decrease particularly marked after 2002.
- Rapid progress towards universal enrolment and gender parity at the primary level for example in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia shows that national political will combined with international support can make a difference.
- The cost of schooling remains a major obstacle to education for millions of children and youth despite the abolition of primary school tuition fees in fourteen countries since 2000.
- The gender parity goal has been missed: only about one-third of countries reported parity in both primary and secondary education in 2005, with only three reaching it since 1999.
- An increasing number of international, regional and national assessments report low and unequal learning outcomes, reflecting the extent to which poor education quality is undermining the achievement of EFA.
- National governments and donors have favoured formal primary schooling over early childhood, literacy and skills programmes for youth and adults despite the direct impact of these on achieving universal primary education and gender parity.
- Illiteracy is receiving minimal political attention and remains a global disgrace, keeping one in five adults (one in four women) on the margins of society.
- Aid to basic education in low-income countries more than doubled between 2000 and 2004 but decreased significantly in 2005.

Where the world stands on the six EFA goals

- Out of 129 countries, 51 have achieved or are close to achieving the four most quantifiable EFA goals,¹ 53 are in an intermediate position and 25 are far from achieving EFA as a whole, the EFA Development Index shows. The lowest category would be larger still if data were available for a number of fragile states, including conflict or post-conflict countries with very low levels of education development.

1. Early childhood care and education

- Although child mortality rates have dropped, a majority of countries are not taking the necessary policy measures to provide care and education to children below age 3.
- The provision of pre-primary education for children aged 3 and above has improved but remains scarce across sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States.
- Early childhood care and education programmes generally do not reach the poorest and most disadvantaged children, who stand to gain the most from them in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive development.

1. The EFA Development Index reflects progress towards the goals of universal primary education, adult literacy, gender parity and education quality.

2. Universal primary education

- Twenty-three countries that lacked legal provisions for compulsory education in 2000 have since established them. Compulsory education laws now exist in 95% of 203 countries and territories.
- The global net enrolment ratio rose from 83% to 87% between 1999 and 2005, faster than from 1991 to 1999. Participation levels increased most rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa (23%) and South and West Asia (11%).
- The number of out-of-school children dropped by 24 million to 72 million between 1999 and 2005. Thirty-five fragile states account for 37% of all out-of-school children.
- Despite overall enrolment increases, subnational disparities in school participation persist between regions, provinces or states and between urban and rural areas. Children from poor, indigenous and disabled populations are also at a systematic disadvantage, as are those living in slums.
- On current trends, fifty-eight out of eighty-six countries that have not yet reached universal primary enrolment will not achieve it by 2015.

3. Learning needs of young people and adults

- Non-formal education programmes remain neglected in terms of public funding, although some governments have recently developed national frameworks for sustained provision.
- Household surveys show that non-formal education is nonetheless the main route to learning for many disadvantaged youth and adults in some of the world's poorest countries.

4. Adult literacy

- Worldwide, 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills, as measured by conventional methods. Some 64% of them are women, a share virtually unchanged since the early 1990s. Direct measurement of literacy skills would significantly increase the global estimate of the number of adults denied the right to literacy.

- Most countries have made little progress during the past decade in reducing the absolute number of adult illiterates, with the notable exception of China.
- The adult literacy rate in developing countries increased from 68% to 77% between the periods 1985–1994 and 1995–2004.
- Of the 101 countries still far from achieving 'universal literacy', 72 will not succeed in halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2015.

5. Gender

- Only 59 countries with data had achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005; 75% of countries are at parity or close to it at primary level, while 47% are close to reaching the goal in secondary education.
- Boys' underparticipation and underachievement are of growing concern in secondary education.
- Only 18 out of 113 countries that missed the gender parity goal at primary and secondary level in 2005 stand a chance of achieving it by 2015.
- Gender equality remains elusive: sexual violence, insecure school environments and inadequate sanitation disproportionately affect girls' self-esteem, participation and retention. Textbooks, curricula and teacher attitudes continue to reinforce stereotypes on gender roles in society.

6. Quality

- Survival rates to the last grade of primary school improved between 1999 and 2004 in most countries with data but remained low in sub-Saharan Africa (median rate of 63%) and in South and West Asia (79%).
- Relatively low and unequal learning achievement in language and mathematics characterize many countries worldwide.
- Crowded and dilapidated classrooms, too few textbooks and insufficient instructional time are widespread in many developing countries and fragile states.

- Pupil/teacher ratios have increased in sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia since 1999. Eighteen million new primary school teachers are needed worldwide to reach universal primary education by 2015.
- Many governments are hiring contract teachers to save costs and rapidly increase the teaching force, but where such teachers lack adequate training and service conditions, this practice could have a negative impact on quality in the future.

Financing EFA

National spending

- Outside North America and Western Europe, education expenditure as a share of GNP increased in fifty countries and decreased in thirty-four between 1999 and 2005.
- Public expenditure on education increased by over 5% annually in sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia, the two regions farthest from achieving the EFA goals.
- Countries with primary net enrolment ratios below 80% in 2005 but making significant progress towards UPE increased their education expenditure as a share of GNP from 3.4% in 1999 to 4.2% in 2005, on average. In countries where progress has been slower, the average share decreased.

Aid to basic education

- Commitments to basic education increased from US\$2.7 billion in 2000 to US\$5.1 billion in 2004 before declining to US\$3.7 billion in 2005.
- The increase particularly benefited low-income countries, which received on average US\$3.1 billion a year in 2004 and 2005. On current trends, and if pledges are met, bilateral aid to basic education will likely reach US\$5 billion a year in 2010. Even when multilateral aid is included, the total will still be well below the US\$11 billion a year required to reach the EFA goals.
- Aid to education is still not targeted to the neediest countries, and a minute share goes to early childhood and literacy programmes.

Top policy priorities

- Increased participation, equity and quality can be promoted together through a mix of adequately financed universal and targeted measures that encompass all six EFA goals.
- Education policies must focus on inclusion, literacy, quality, capacity development and finance.
- In addition the international architecture for EFA must be made more effective.

National governments

Measures to promote inclusion

- assure provision of early childhood care and education programmes with health, nutrition and education components, especially for the most disadvantaged children;
- abolish school fees and provide enough places and teachers in school to cope with new entrants;
- provide financial support such as scholarships, cash or in-kind transfers to children from poorer households;
- take measures to alleviate the need for child labour and allow for flexible schooling and non-formal equivalency courses for working children and youth;
- promote inclusive policies that open schools to disabled children, indigenous children and those from other disadvantaged groups;
- address gender disparities by increasing the numbers of female teachers in countries with low enrolment of girls and by building schools close to home and with proper sanitation;
- place top priority on boldly expanding adequately staffed and funded literacy and skills-training programmes for youth and adults, harnessing all forms of media;
- establish media and publishing policies that promote reading.

Measures to promote quality

- use incentives to attract new recruits to the teaching profession, provide adequate teacher training and professional development;
- assure sufficient instructional time and a textbook development and distribution policy;
- create safe and healthy learning environments;
- promote gender equality through teacher training, the curriculum and textbook contents;
- recognize the importance of mother tongue instruction in early childhood and the first years of primary school;
- develop constructive partnerships between government and the non-state sector to increase access to quality education.

Measures to improve capacity and financing

- maintain or, where necessary, increase public spending, noting that unit costs are likely to rise for enrolling the most disadvantaged and marginalized;
- increase financing for early childhood, literacy and quality, especially teacher training and professional development;
- strengthen management capacity at all levels of government;
- coordinate early childhood and adult literacy programmes with all involved ministries and NGOs;
- formally engage civil society in EFA policy formulation, implementation and monitoring;
- invest in capacity to collect, analyse and use data on education systems.

Civil society

- further strengthen civil society organizations that enable citizens to advocate for EFA and to hold government and the international community to account;
- engage with national governments in the development, implementation and monitoring of education policies;
- encourage training in education policy analysis and finance.

Donors and international agencies

- Increase aid to basic education sharply to meet the annual external financing need of US\$11 billion by 2010.
- Raise to at least 10% the share of basic education in bilateral sectoral aid.
- Improve governments' capacity to use larger amounts of aid effectively.
- Ensure that aid is:
 - more targeted, to reach the countries most in need, especially fragile states and countries in sub-Saharan Africa;
 - more comprehensive, to include early childhood, youth and adult literacy and skills programmes, and capacity development in policy, planning, implementation and monitoring;
 - more focused on EFA rather than post-secondary education;
 - more predictable, to support long-term national education plans;
 - more aligned with government programmes and priorities.

Overview

Chapter 1 The enduring relevance of Education for All



This edition of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* marks the midway point in an ambitious international movement to expand learning opportunities for every child, youth and adult in the world by 2015.

In April 2000 in Dakar, 164 governments together with partner institutions adopted a Framework for Action focusing on the achievement of six Education for All goals pertaining to the expansion of early childhood care and education, the achievement of universal primary education, the development of learning opportunities for youth and adults, the spread of literacy, the achievement of gender parity and gender equality in education and improvements in education quality.

The EFA agenda rests on a belief that public policy can radically transform education systems, given adequate political will and resources. The global prospect for achieving EFA is also influenced by trends in demography, urbanization, migration, health, and economic and political systems. By 2008, for example, more than half the world's population (about 3.3 billion people) will live in urban areas, nearly one-third of whom will live in slums. Due to continued population growth, the least developed countries, which are furthest from universal participation at primary and secondary level, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, will face increasing enrolment pressure in coming decades. Among health concerns, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are having a devastating impact on school systems, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Real per capita income growth was sustained in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia between 2000 and 2005, and remained high in East Asia and the Pacific. But despite reductions in the number of people living in absolute poverty, there has been rising inequality between rich and poor. Unless policies targeting poor and disadvantaged children are introduced, existing socio-economic inequality may be worsened through poor education and differentiated school systems.

Strengthening and supporting 'fragile' states has been an emerging priority on the EFA agenda since 2000. Such states are characterized by weak institutions, prolonged economic hardship and/or conflict, with a direct negative impact on education development. More than half a billion people are estimated to live in thirty-five fragile states.

Official development assistance from bilateral donors grew by 9% annually between 1999 and 2005, but preliminary data indicate a downturn in 2006. In 2005, the G8 countries made commitments to increase aid substantially through a variety of means, including traditional development assistance and debt relief. Yet donors need to accelerate plans to scale up aid to Africa if their promises are to retain credibility.

Recent research confirms the developmental benefits of expanding education systems, but points to a need for complementary policies to offset inequality and improve learning. The right to education has been enforced through measures such as compulsory education laws, passed by an increasing number of countries since 2000.

At international level, initiatives have focused on specific targets (literacy, girls, HIV/AIDS) and on improving the quality of aid. The convergence of such initiatives, however, will be vital for the full range of education for all goals to be achieved.

Chapter 2 The six goals: how far have we come?



This chapter provides a systematic assessment of progress towards EFA since Dakar, comparing data which pertain to the school year ending in 2005 with corresponding 1999 figures. It focuses on the regions and countries that face the greatest challenges in achieving the goals by 2015 and draws attention to inequities within countries.

Early childhood care and education programmes improve children's health, nutrition, well-being and cognitive development. They offset disadvantage and inequality and lead to better achievement in primary school. The comprehensive care and education of children below age 3 remains a neglected area. Meanwhile, access to pre-primary education for children aged 3 and above has improved, but remains very uneven. Many developing countries still have limited or non-existent pre-primary education systems.

Access to and participation in primary education have sharply increased since Dakar, and the number of out-of-school children dropped from 96 million to 72 million between 1999 and 2005. The Arab States, sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia have shown substantial increases in enrolment ratios. However, progression through the primary grades and school completion remain important concerns nearly everywhere. Most countries, even those with relatively high primary enrolment ratios, need to address equity issues.

The learning needs of young people and adults remain woefully undocumented. This goal has been particularly neglected, in part because of the difficulty of defining and monitoring it. Many young people and adults acquire skills through informal means, or through a great variety of non-formal literacy, equivalency, life-skills and livelihood programmes.

Adult literacy remains a serious global issue: 774 million adults (of whom 64% are women) still lack basic literacy skills. Three regions (East Asia, South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa) concentrate the vast majority of the one in five adults around the world still denied the right to literacy. Except in China, there has been little progress during the past decade in reducing the large number of illiterate adults.

The goal of eliminating gender disparities in both primary and secondary education by 2005 has been missed in a great majority of countries. While about 63% of countries with data have managed to eliminate gender disparities in primary education, only 37% have done so at secondary level.

Progress towards gender equality remains elusive. Sexual violence, insecure environments, and inadequate sanitation in schools disproportionately affect girls. Physical violence, by contrast, mainly affects boys. Gender-biased teacher attitudes, perceptions and expectations are common, and textbooks often reinforce stereotypes of gender-

specific roles of adult men and women. Academic performance of boys and girls is converging, but fields of study and occupational orientations continue to be clustered by gender.

International and regional assessments, and a growing number of national assessments conducted since 1999 show that poor learning outcomes in language, mathematics and other subjects still characterize many countries worldwide. More than 60% of countries allocate fewer than 800 yearly hours of instruction in grades 1–6, even though recent research confirms positive correlations between instructional time and learning outcomes. Many developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, have crowded classrooms, poor school infrastructure and inadequate learning environments. Acute shortages of teachers are common, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia, and even greater shortages of trained teachers in some countries restrict quality teaching and learning.

The EFA Development Index, calculated for 129 countries, points to multiple challenges in 25 countries that are far from achieving EFA as a whole, several of them characterized as fragile states. Two-thirds are in sub-Saharan Africa, but the group also includes some Arab States and countries of South and West Asia. Data are lacking for many countries, among them a number of fragile states, which are likely to suffer from limited education development.

Chapter 3 Countries on the move



This chapter focuses on three policy areas to illustrate how countries are developing and strengthening education systems

in order to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults: the importance of having an institutional environment that promotes and supports education; strategies that countries have followed to expand access to education, especially for the poorest and most disadvantaged groups; and measures countries are taking to improve teaching and learning. Information is based on a review of policies and strategies adopted since 2000 by a selected group of thirty developing countries.

Governments' efforts to develop national education sector plans have gained momentum since 2000 but weak management capacity is a major barrier to progress in many low-income countries. Although civil society has played a much more visible advocacy role since Dakar, opportunities to engage with government in setting national education agendas remain limited.

Two other institutional trends are the increasing prominence of non-state providers, especially in countries where enrolment has risen sharply since 2000, and the decentralization of financial, political and administrative responsibilities for education. A common problem with decentralization is confusion about new roles and responsibilities, and there is a risk of making subnational inequality worse.

The Dakar Framework calls on governments to ensure that education systems explicitly identify, target and respond to the circumstances of the poorest and most marginalized populations. The need for a comprehensive approach not limited to universal primary education is a hallmark of the Dakar agenda.

Early childhood care and education has moved up on policy agendas, especially pre-primary education, but problems persist: not enough focus on under-3s; a lack of holistic approaches encompassing care, health and nutrition in addition to education; a poorly trained workforce; and a lack of coordination among providers.

The Dakar goal of halving the illiteracy rate by 2015 will not be met without a substantial scaling up of programmes. Although some governments in recent years have made efforts to develop national frameworks for meeting the needs of youth and adults, programmes remain marginal and underfunded.

Fourteen countries have abolished tuition fees for primary school since 2000. Evidence suggests that this measure encourages enrolment of the most disadvantaged children. In several countries where girls' enrolment has increased sharply since 1999, governments have taken special measures to increase their participation: improving school infrastructure, encouraging the recruitment of female teachers and making learning materials free.

More targeted approaches are needed to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children. A number of countries in Latin America have introduced programmes transferring money directly to marginalized households that enrol their children. In Asia, stipend programmes have encouraged the

transition of girls to secondary school. Flexible schooling, non-formal equivalency courses and bridging courses are among options being taken to provide for the learning needs of working children and youth.

To varying degrees, all countries need to improve the quality of education. There is no single strategy, but key elements include health and safety at school, enough learning time and textbooks, skilled and motivated teachers, and effective teaching methods. To address teacher shortages and limit costs, many governments are hiring teachers on temporary contracts. In the long term, governments need a policy framework assuring the integration of contract teachers with regular teachers into one career stream.

Classroom practices and curricula influence teaching and learning. Of particular importance are the use of children's mother tongue, regular assessment, enough textbooks, and access to information and communication technology. Many countries are moving towards a system of continuous pupil assessment. While there is a long way to go in promoting multilingualism and mother-tongue initial instruction in primary education, progress is being made.

Although the number of armed conflicts around the world is in decline, most wars continue to be fought in the developing world, with civilians suffering the most casualties. By investing in education in post-conflict situations, governments and the international community send out a forceful message about building a more peaceful future.

Chapter 4

Progress in financing Education for All



The ultimate responsibility for achieving EFA lies with governments, but for many countries, especially the poorest, progress also relies on support from donors.

While a majority of governments, particularly in the least developed countries and most noticeably in sub-Saharan Africa, have increased the financial priority given to education, too many countries continue to allocate very low shares of GNP and total government expenditure to education.

Even when tuition fees have been abolished, costs of schooling remain an obstacle for the poorest families, although some governments have been innovative in devising ways to reduce the financial burden of schooling on households.

The overall amount of external financial support for basic education grew consistently between 2000 and 2004, particularly benefiting low-income countries, but declined in 2005. The amount and distribution of aid remain inadequate: too many donors are giving greater priority to higher levels of education, too high a share of education aid continues to go to middle-income rather than low-income countries, and levels of assistance to the latter vary widely by country.

The movement to improve the effectiveness of aid through greater harmonization between donors and alignment between donors and governments has accelerated since 2000. The Fast Track Initiative is one illustration of this, with education sector plans of thirty-one countries now endorsed. Multiple donors have been giving growing support for sector-wide programmes with sectoral budget support, including for education.

External aid for basic education does not automatically lead to improvement in educational outcomes. Quantitative studies suggest that the impact is positive, though less than generally anticipated, and more qualitative evaluations indicate that some objectives are much easier to reach through external funding than others.

Some major initiatives to increase levels of debt relief for highly indebted poor countries have been taken since 1999, first for bilateral debt and since 2005 for debt to multilateral institutions; these initiatives appear to have benefited basic education. In some countries governments and donors have worked well together since Dakar and been able to increase financial resources for basic education significantly. In others, however, this has not happened. Such countries, where education development is low, no strong reform programmes are in place and donor interest is lacking, are in the greatest danger of not fulfilling the goals set at Dakar.

Chapter 5 The way forward



As we move beyond the midway point from Dakar to 2015, key questions arise. What are the prospects for achieving

the goals, and how can governments and actors at every level accelerate the movement towards quality education for all?

Projections suggest that, without accelerated efforts:

- 58 of the 86 countries that have not yet reached universal primary enrolment will not achieve it by 2015;
- 72 out of 101 countries will not succeed in halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2015;
- only 18 of the 113 countries that missed the gender parity goal at primary and secondary level in 2005 stand a chance of achieving it by 2015.

Countries making significant progress towards universal enrolment in primary education have tended to increase their education expenditure as a share of GNP. In countries where the progress has been slower, the share has decreased.

The analysis also signals that, although early childhood care and education is receiving increasing attention, participation rates remain relatively low in all developing regions except Latin America and the Caribbean. Sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia, the two regions with the lowest literacy rates and the highest number of out-of-school children, need to pay much stronger attention to the inclusion of youth and adults in basic education through literacy and other programmes.

Across the world, more than 18 million new teachers will need to be employed by 2015. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the greatest challenge. To reach universal primary education the stock of teachers will have to increase from 2.4 million in 2004 to 4 million in 2015, in addition to the 2.1 million new teachers required to replace those leaving the teaching workforce.

Growth in per capita income across all low-income countries creates the potential for higher government expenditure on EFA, as does the increasing share of national income that governments across Asia and sub-Saharan Africa allocate to EFA. But governments face the need to spend more on secondary and tertiary education, as well as on basic education.

The amount of aid to basic education for low-income countries in 2004 and 2005 – an average of US\$3.1 billion year – is clearly well below the estimated annual US\$11 billion required to reach the EFA goals. If donors fulfil their pledges, annual bilateral aid to basic education will reach US\$5 billion by 2010.

Overall, the thirty-two low-income countries identified as having the lowest levels of education development received one-third of total aid to basic education in 2004–2005, roughly the same as before Dakar; six of them received below-average amounts of aid to basic education per primary school-age child.

Towards an agenda to make EFA happen

At global level:

- All stakeholders need to ensure that EFA remains a priority in the face of other emerging issues such as climate change and public health, and that the focus is not just on universal primary education.
- Policy and implementation must emphasize inclusion, literacy, quality, capacity development and finance.
- The international architecture for EFA needs to be made more effective.

National governments must:

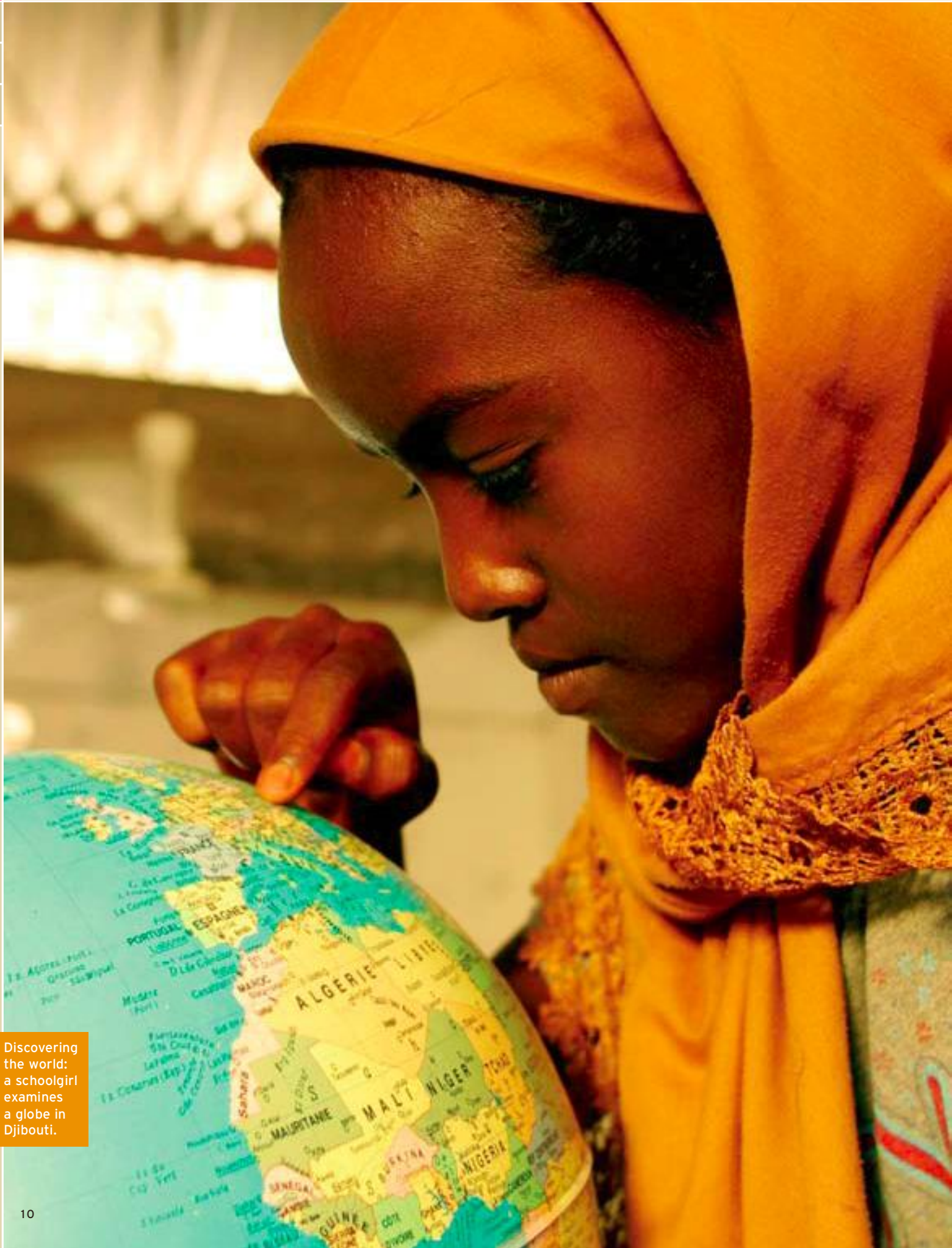
- take full responsibility for all the EFA goals, even if all services are not delivered through the public sector;
- include the poorest and most marginalized children, youth and adults through better school infrastructure, elimination of tuition fees, provision of additional financial support to the poorest households and flexible schooling for working children and youth;
- ensure that progress towards gender parity is maintained sustained and that gender equality is pursued;

- recruit and train teachers on a vast scale;
- greatly expand adult literacy programmes;
- make sure pupils master basic skills by paying particular attention to teacher training, safe and healthy learning environments, mother tongue instruction and sufficient learning resources;
- maintain public spending on basic education and expand it where necessary;
- engage with civil society organizations in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Bilateral and multilateral agencies alike need to:

- increase the amount of aid they provide and deploy it differently;
- make long-term commitments, to enable finance ministers to approve major policy initiatives;
- pay special attention to sub-Saharan Africa and fragile states;
- continue efforts on aligning aid behind country-led sector plans.

The evidence since Dakar is clear: determined national governments have made progress in all regions and increased aid has worked to support this progress. This momentum must be maintained and accelerated in the short time left to 2015 if the right to education at every age is to be fulfilled.



Discovering the world: a schoolgirl examines a globe in Djibouti.

Chapter 1

The enduring relevance of Education for All

This edition of the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* marks the midway point in an ambitious international movement to expand learning opportunities for every child, youth and adult by 2015. At the World Education Forum in 2000, 164 governments, 35 international institutions and 127 non-government organizations adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, promising to commit the necessary resources and effort to achieve a comprehensive and inclusive system of quality education for all. This introductory chapter examines the many developments occurring within education since 2000, and reflects on how these and other changes outside education have affected the Education for All vision.

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Introduction

Ten years after the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, many stakeholders maintained that insufficient progress had been made towards the realization of Education for All (EFA) and that a renewed commitment was necessary. The World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, adopted a Framework for Action focusing on the achievement by 2015 of six EFA goals. Gender parity, defined as equal figures for both genders in key education indicators at the primary and secondary levels, was meant to be achieved even earlier, by 2005.

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report* was established with the 2002 edition to monitor progress towards the EFA goals. Subsequent editions have each focused on a specific goal. Data are now available for 2005 and they show definitively that a large number of countries¹ did not achieve the gender parity goal. Halfway between 2000 and 2015, this *Global Monitoring Report* assesses the progress of the EFA movement since 2000 and identifies implications for the achievement of the Dakar agenda:

- Have national governments followed up on their commitment to the EFA goals?
- Has the international community provided adequate support to national governments?
- Is the world, as a result, progressing towards EFA by 2015 and, if not, which are the goals that have been neglected and the countries or regions in greatest difficulty?

This Report emphasizes that:

- The gender parity goal set for 2005 has been missed. Only 59 out of 181 countries with data have no gender disparities in both primary and secondary education. Most of these countries had already reached gender parity by 1999. Only three countries eliminated gender disparities between 1999 and 2005.
- Very significant progress has been made in terms of enrolment in primary and lower secondary school, especially for girls and in

1. Throughout the Report, the word 'countries' should generally be understood as meaning 'countries and territories'.

some of the regions and countries that were facing the greatest challenges in 2000. A major equity challenge remains: to enrol and retain all children, especially the poor and disadvantaged, and those living in fragile states.²

- Fields as important as early childhood care and education (ECCE) and learning opportunities for youth and adults, including in literacy, have suffered because of continued neglect from national governments and the international community. This is a further aspect of the equity challenge: giving all people an educational start (through ECCE) and compensating for past failures to do so (via youth and adult programmes, especially literacy).
- The quality of education is increasingly perceived as the pervasive issue, across the world. Systematic assessments of learning outcomes, which have become more frequent in recent years, show problematically low and/or unequal levels of learning in most countries. Although the proportion of an age cohort entering the first grade of primary education is high or has increased in most developing countries, many children do not complete the primary cycle and even fewer master basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Reforming classroom teaching and learning, and the management of schools, so as to reduce gender inequality and improve the quality of education has proved difficult and not easily amenable to global policy prescriptions.
- The flow of external financial support for basic education grew consistently between 2000 and 2004, but declined in 2005 and remains totally inadequate overall, compared to needs, in terms of both level and allocation.
- The vision of EFA has tended to be reduced to an emphasis on provision of formal schooling at primary level, which is necessary but insufficient to achieve education 'for every citizen in every society'. This limited vision has particularly been reinforced at the international level, where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with their focus on primary education, are dominant and with the growth of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), which also largely limits itself to primary education, albeit in a broader sectoral context.

This introductory chapter presents Education for All as it was envisaged in Dakar in 2000 and reflects on developments both within and outside the education sphere that have since affected its realization. It then explains how the subsequent chapters will assess the EFA movement.

Education for All as endorsed at the Dakar World Education Forum

From the Jomtien Declaration to the Dakar Framework

In March 1990, the World Conference on Education for All, in Jomtien, Thailand, adopted the World Declaration on Education for All, which stated that 'everyone has a right to education', recognized the setbacks suffered by the education systems of many developing countries during the 1980s, and proclaimed a commitment to meeting the basic learning needs of every citizen in every society (Box 1.1). This concept of 'Education for All' meant much more than the expansion of existing formal school systems to foster economic growth through the spread of basic cognitive skills. It implied reflection on the nature and purpose of education in each society, given that it stressed basing education expansion on the actual needs of children, youth and adults, especially the excluded, as well as promoting culture and empowering citizens.

By the late 1990s, it was felt that, despite the emphasis on basic education repeated at many international conferences that followed Jomtien, the EFA agenda had essentially been neglected. An EFA Assessment conducted in 1999–2000, involving six regional conferences, revealed that, 'at the start of the new millennium':

- (i) Of the more than 800 million children under 6 years of age, fewer than a third benefit[ed] from any form of early childhood education.
- (ii) Some 113 million children, 60 per cent of whom [were] girls, [had] no access to primary schooling.
- (iii) At least 880 million adults [were] illiterate, of whom the majority [were] women (UNESCO, 2000a, Commentary, para. 5).

The concept of EFA implies reflection on the nature and purpose of education in each society

2. See Box 1.4 on fragile states.

Box 1.1: The EFA perspective

Article 1 of the World Declaration on Education for All adopted at Jomtien defined the purpose of EFA as meeting basic learning needs:

1. Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time.
2. The satisfaction of these needs empowers individuals in any society and confers upon them a responsibility to respect and build upon their collective cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage, to promote the education of others, to further the cause of social justice, to achieve environmental protection, to be tolerant towards social, political and religious systems which differ from their own, ensuring that commonly accepted humanistic values and human rights are upheld, and to work for international peace and solidarity in an interdependent world.
3. Another and no less fundamental aim of educational development is the transmission and enrichment of common cultural and moral values. It is in these values that the individual and society find their identity and worth.
4. Basic education is more than an end in itself. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may build, systematically, further levels and types of education and training.

Source: UNESCO (1990).

The state of education was particularly problematic in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, in the Arab States, in the least developed countries and in countries in conflict or undergoing reconstruction. In addition, several areas of concern were identified: the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on education systems, the lack of early childhood education opportunities, school health, the education of girls and women, adult literacy and the provision of education in situations of crisis and emergency.

In April 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, 164 country governments, together with representatives of regional groups, international organizations, donor agencies, non-government organizations and civil society, reaffirmed the Jomtien perspective on EFA and adopted a

Framework for Action designed to deliver on the commitments made since 1990, with the aim of achieving Education for All within a generation and sustaining it thereafter.³

EFA goals and strategies

There are three key elements of the Dakar Framework for Action. The first is a set of six goals to be achieved by all countries by 2015 (Box 1.2). The fact that part of the fifth goal – eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education (defined as disparities in key education indicators such as enrolment and completion ratios) – was to be achieved within five years rather than fifteen may have been more an expression of strong commitment to female education than a realistic target.

The MDGs, approved by world leaders at the United Nations Millenium Summit in 2000 and reaffirmed at the UN World Summit in 2005, form an agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives, and for the activities of many aid agencies. Two of them echo EFA goals 2 and 5:

- MDG 2. Achieve universal primary education. (Target: ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of good quality primary schooling.)
- MDG 3. Promote gender equality and empower women. (Target: eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015).

In addition, MDG 8 is to 'Develop a global partnership for development', encompassing the target of addressing the least developed countries' special needs through 'more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction' (United Nations, 2001a).

The second element of the Dakar Framework for Action is a set of twelve strategies to be followed by all participants in the World Education Forum, whether governments or others (Box 1.3).

The Dakar Framework reaffirms the prominence of national governments in the expansion of education opportunities: 'The heart of EFA activity lies at the country level' (UNESCO, 2000a, Framework, para. 16). Governments are to implement national

3. Five international agencies jointly convened the Dakar forum: UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank.

Box 1.2: The Dakar EFA goals

Paragraph 7 of the Dakar Framework for Action defines the EFA goals the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledged themselves to achieve:

1. expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
4. achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for adults;
5. eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Source: UNESCO (2000a).

Box 1.3: The Dakar EFA strategies

Paragraph 8 of the Dakar Framework lists twelve strategies:

1. mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;
2. promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;
3. ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;
4. develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;
5. meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict;
6. implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
7. implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
8. create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all;
9. enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers;
10. harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals;
11. systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels; and
12. build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards education for all.

Source: UNESCO (2000a).

A key element of the Dakar Framework constitutes an international pledge

plans of action for EFA (analysed in the 2006 Report: UNESCO, 2005a, pp. 76-84), integrated into their broader poverty reduction and development strategies, and developed in partnership with civil society (see, for example, UNESCO, 2006a, pp. 175-7).

The third key element of the Dakar Framework has to do with resources and constitutes an international pledge. Budget priorities should be altered as far as necessary to achieve the goals, and the international community promises to support countries that lack the necessary resources: 'Political will and stronger national leadership are needed for the effective and successful implementation of national plans in each of the

countries concerned. However, political will must be underpinned by resources. The international community acknowledges that many countries currently lack the resources to achieve education for all within an acceptable time-frame. ... We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources' (UNESCO, 2000a, Framework, para. 10).

EFA as a human right

Both the Jomtien Declaration and the Dakar Framework for Action draw on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and subsequent international treaties. These

treaties establish the right to education and to non-discrimination, and have the force of law for the governments that ratify them. Specific provisions in these conventions emphasize free and compulsory primary education, and they also provide a backbone for the other EFA goals (Table 1.1).

Both the Jomtien Declaration and the Dakar Framework for Action draw on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Table 1.1: Selected international human rights treaties relevant to the EFA goals

Instrument	Components relevant to Education for All	Ratifications ¹
International Bill of Human Rights:	Free and compulsory elementary (primary) education. Accessibility to higher levels of education on the basis of merit. No discrimination.	
• Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)		
• International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)		160 (17)
• International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)		156 (14)
Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation [No. 111. Adopted by ILO, 1958]	Protection of all persons in vocational training and employment from discrimination (based on distinction, exclusion or preference) made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.	166 (26)
Convention against Discrimination in Education [Adopted by UNESCO, 1960]	Free and compulsory primary education. Governments shall formulate, develop and apply a national policy tending to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment. No discrimination in access to or quality of education.	94 (7)
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)	Right to education and training with no distinction as to race, colour or national or ethnic origin. Adopt measures, particularly in the field of teaching, education, culture and information, to combat prejudices which lead to racial discrimination.	173 (19)
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate discrimination against women in the field of education. • Ensure equality of access to same curricula, qualified teaching staff, and school facilities and equipment of the same quality. • Elimination of stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women by encouraging coeducation. • Reduction of female dropout rates; organization of programmes for those who left school prematurely. • Access to health information, including reproductive health. 	185 (21)
Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries [No. 169. Adopted by ILO, 1989]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities to obtain education. • Education responsive to culture and needs of indigenous peoples. • Educational measures to eliminate prejudices. 	18 (5)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to free and compulsory primary schooling without any type of discrimination. Access to higher levels of education. • Emphasis on child well-being and development, encouragement of measures to support child care. 	193 (3)
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality of treatment with nationals of the country concerned for access to education. • Facilitation of teaching of mother tongue and culture for the children of migrant workers. 	37 (25)
Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour [No. 182. Adopted by ILO, 1999]	Access to free basic education and to vocational training (wherever possible and appropriate) for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour.	165 (160)
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit on voluntary recruitment of children into national armed forces, ban on recruitment of all children into independent armed groups. • Condemnation of the targeting of children and schools during armed conflicts. 	117 (117)
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No exclusion from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability. • Assurance of an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning. 	2 (2)

1. Total number of ratifications as of August 2007 (ratifications since Dakar in parentheses).

2. Not yet into force. 109 countries and the European Community have signed the Convention and 64 have signed the Optional Protocol. Five countries have ratified the Convention and three countries have ratified the Optional Protocol.

Sources: ILO (1958, 1989, 1999); OHCHR (1965, 1966a, 1966b, 1979, 1989, 1990, 2000, 2006); UNESCO (1960); United Nations (1948).