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Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All

**23-25 February 2010
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Report

**Report on the Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on
Education for All (EFA)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23-25 February 2010**

Introduction

The Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 23 to 25 February 2010. Jointly organized by UNESCO, the Government of Ethiopia and the African Union, the meeting brought together around 250 EFA partners, including 19 Ministers and Vice-Ministers, as well as high-level representatives of multi- and bi-lateral organizations, regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and parliamentarians.

As a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization, the HLG meeting aimed at agreeing on key policy recommendations related to two main themes - impact of the economic crisis and educational marginalization – based on the *2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the marginalized* and building on results of the Tenth Meeting of the Working Group on EFA (WGEFA) that took place from 9 to 11 December 2009 in Paris.

In addition to the Opening Ceremony, the three-day meeting had two sessions for senior officials on 23 and 25 February and a one-day meeting at Ministerial level on 24 February.

The Opening Ceremony included a special panel on “Considerations for the EFA Agenda beyond 2015” that initiated a debate on the EFA agenda from a longer-term perspective. An additional session was organized on 24 February to express solidarity with the people of Haiti, and to discuss the reconstruction of the education sector.

Technical Meeting : 23 February 2010

The main objective of this meeting was to present the progress made since the Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Group (HLG) on EFA held in Oslo in December 2008, to report on the key outcomes of the Tenth Meeting of the WGEFA and to discuss the draft Addis Ababa Declaration. Participants were updated on EFA partners’ efforts to promote EFA and to increase the visibility of education on the global agenda. Insights were given into ways to strengthen the coordination of education, health and nutrition initiatives, given the increasing evidence of the impact of health and nutrition on EFA. Healthy children learn better and have better cognitive skills. Programmes in early childhood development and specialized school health and environment schemes provide a huge return on investments.

The discussion on education equity in access, attendance, learning processes and outcomes underlined that improving the quality and harmonization of data on marginalized populations on both the demand and supply sides is important. Existing data provides a good basis for monitoring, but there are challenges in seeking conceptual clarity, technical limitations and strengthening national ownership. The indicators must be realistic and take into account country contexts. Creating regional data platforms is thus important, and data collection should become a part of national planning routines.

Improvements in financing education have been made since Dakar, but funds are still lacking and their effective use still remains an issue. Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) has doubled but the levels of financing for basic education have been stagnating. Domestic resources for EFA should increase, while enhancing appropriate policies as well as more effective use of resources, in order to allow national systems to function better. The funds should target those children that are most vulnerable and disbursements should take place at the school level.

The EFA-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), a major resource mobilization mechanism for EFA, is undergoing a reform based on the results of the 2009 evaluation. There will be a single fund, simplifying procedures, enabling quick disbursement of funds and also for strengthening the focus on results.

Challenges related to teachers were another topic discussed, with participants agreeing that the most serious situation is found in sub-Saharan Africa. One of the main outcomes of the Oslo HLG meeting was the creation of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA. It was agreed that this momentum should continue. The Task Force is open to new countries that want to become members and is increasing technical support and North-South-South partnership activities.

The focus of discussions then turned to the draft Addis Ababa Declaration. Building on the work of a preparatory group of volunteer members of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) that started work prior to the Tenth Meeting of the Working Group (December, 2009), the Working Group came up with a set of policy recommendations that reflected the key points from the WGEFA deliberations. Following the WGEFA meeting, these recommendations were transformed into the draft Addis Ababa Declaration by the expanded Preparatory Group of volunteer representatives of the IAP and the Working Group. Senior Officials at the HLG technical meeting came up with a number of suggestions for making the Draft less technical and more concise, and agreed to form a small drafting group with representatives from all the EFA partnerships to make the new version available for HLG Ministerial discussions on 24 February.

Opening Ceremony : 23 February 2010

Welcome Addresses

The Opening Ceremony was moderated by Ms Netsanet Asfaw, Assistant Whip of the House of People's Representatives, Ethiopia and began with an address by Mr Demeke Mekonnen, Ethiopian Minister of Education. He spoke of the rapid progress in Ethiopia's education system over the last two decades and of its current challenges.

Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, then shared her broad vision of EFA, pointing out where attention is urgently needed in order to accelerate progress towards achieving the EFA goals by 2015, and reiterating that education is a top priority for UNESCO. The priority areas she referred to include promoting access and inclusion, raising quality standards and enhancing the relevance of education, as well as increasing resource mobilization and its effective use in strengthening inclusive education systems and in improving policy-making.

Ms Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) was the third speaker and she highlighted the negative effects of the economic crisis on the fiscal capacities of African countries, noting their impact on efforts to eradicate poverty and improve the lives of the marginalized.

Mr Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission (AUC) spoke on Africa's collective efforts to achieve the EFA goals and drew attention to the African Union's Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) and the need to revitalize African universities. The last speaker at the Opening Ceremony was Mr Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Government of Ethiopia. He detailed Ethiopia's recent initiatives to provide education for all, including those in rural areas and pastoral communities and defined education as "the most critical instrument for the social, economic and political empowerment of citizens".

Panel Discussion: "Considerations for the EFA Agenda beyond 2015"

At this critical point of the EFA movement, this session provided an opportunity for the international community to engage in dialogue on the future of the EFA framework beyond 2015. Four speakers shared their thoughts and the session was chaired by Ms Carol Bellamy, EFA-Fast Track Initiative Board of Directors.

Referring to the six EFA goals adopted 10 years ago, Mr Qian Tang, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, began by noting that the broader EFA package has concentrated in recent years on primary education and gender issues. EFA cannot be achieved without a holistic approach to Education for All throughout life and at all levels. "What kind of education?" should be the centre-piece of our renewed EFA global agenda. Mr Tang invited participants to discuss and reflect on the EFA agenda for the post-2015 period, noting that the topic would continue to be addressed during the next few years at each opportunity (e.g. at the MDG Summit, G-8 and G-20 Summits, World Conference on ECCE, ECOSOC Conference in 2011 and the 49th session of the International Conference on Education in 2013).

The importance of linking the EFA framework with other sectors was highlighted by Ms Sheila Sizulu, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme. She informed participants of a school feeding programme that reaches the most vulnerable populations, thereby acting as a unique social safety net. With investment in school health and feeding gathering increasing support due to their high returns, she stressed the need to mainstream these programmes in national frameworks and policies. Case studies show that programmes are more successful when they are need-based, well-targeted, cost-effective and include the participation of local communities. She called upon EFA partners to develop a plan showing exactly how the EFA goals will be reached by 2015.

Ms Jennifer Chiwela, a representative of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA and Chairperson of the Africa Network Campaign on EFA (ANCEFA), reminded participants that the EFA goals have not been sufficiently addressed in a number of countries. The current EFA framework - a full set of "six in one" - requires adequate political and financial support, which has not always been present. An assessment of the EFA framework should be carried out only after these requirements have been met. The EFA process needs to ensure a fair

hearing of all partners, including civil society. When considering the post-2015 period, Ms Chiwela urged the international community to outline a specific agenda for post-secondary and lifelong learning.

Mr Joseph Nsengimana, Corporate Affairs Group and Strategic Alliances, Africa, Intel Corporation, began by asking participants to reflect on the phrase “What kind of education?”. To some extent the private sector has been left out of this discussion until recently, he said, but it remains an EFA partner and can contribute to the implementation of the current EFA framework. Regarding the EFA goal 6 on quality, for instance, Mr Nsengimana presented the work on learning outcomes assessment undertaken by CISCO, Intel and Microsoft, along with a wide network of research institutes. Moreover, Intel worked with several governments, UNESCO, the World Bank, and USAID to develop policies on ICTs and education. A lesson learned from the 1980s economic crisis is that countries that invested in education were in a better position to emerge from the crisis, as well as to manage the post-crisis years.

The floor was then opened for discussion during which the value of the EFA framework and its relevance were highlighted, notably the role it has played in facilitating remarkable progress in education. Several people stressed the critical importance of a holistic approach to EFA, while the link between donor prioritization and a tendency to focus on a few specific goals was pointed out. It was agreed that discussions on the post-2015 EFA agenda should continue, when topics such as ECCE, post-primary education, technical and vocational education (TVET), higher education, ICT and education and quality can be examined further. Participants were also reminded of the need to support the implementation of the current EFA framework by 2015 fully, and to assess what is effective and what is not.

1GOAL campaign

Mr Kailash Satyarthi, President of the Global Campaign for Education, presented the 1Goal, an advocacy campaign that seeks to raise awareness of the importance of education. The campaign has been gaining momentum in all regions of the world, leading up to the FIFA World Cup 2010 final in South Africa in July. Celebrities and sports personalities are involved in motivating and mobilizing the World Cup audience through video and print. Using websites and mobile phones for mass mobilization, Mr Satyarthi said that the GCE will send strategic messages, including “increase domestic budgets and innovative financing” and “help the marginalized to access meaningful education”.

Plenary Sessions : 24 February 2010

Introduction

The HLG Ministerial sessions were opened by Ms Irina Bokova, who introduced the two main topics of the meeting – educational marginalization and the impact of the economic crisis – while also drawing attention to other important issues including joint advocacy and a review of the global EFA coordination mechanism. Mr Qian Tang chaired this plenary session and provided a brief account of the preparation and content of the draft Addis Ababa Declaration that would be adopted later on in the day.

Presentations

- **Progress since Oslo**

A brief report was made on progress since the Oslo HLG meeting, building on information given during the technical meeting on 23 February (see above).

- **Progress report on the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA**

Mr Tresna Dermawan Kunaefi, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Indonesia to UNESCO, provided an overview of the history and work of the Task Force since its inception during the Eighth HLG meeting in Oslo. He began by explaining the rationale behind the Task Force's mandate - increased investment in teachers - noting that qualified teachers are a prerequisite to achieving every one of the EFA goals, as well as being a key to increasing access and enhancing the quality of education. An estimated 10.3 million new teachers are currently needed if universal primary education is to be achieved by 2015. The Task Force is a voluntary global alliance of EFA partners working together to address this estimated "teacher gap", and is composed at present of 64 countries and 18 organizations and funded by the European Commission (EC), France, Germany, Indonesia and Norway. Mr Kunaefi reported that a total of US\$ 4.5 million have been committed to date of which approximately US\$ 4.1 million have been received. The Task Force governance structure includes a steering committee co-chaired by Indonesia and the EC and a dedicated Secretariat constituted as an autonomous entity within UNESCO.

Mr Kunaefi presented the Task Force's Action Plan from 2009-2012 and a one-year workplan drawn up around three major issues: policy, capacity and financing needs. Since 2009, a number of advocacy activities have been carried out during high-level events (e.g. EFA-FTI Partnership meeting, 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers) raising awareness of the teacher gap. The Task Force has also undertaken work such as an analysis of the "GMR through a teacher lens" and a literature review on "teacher attrition" to improve policy dialogue. In the coming months the Task Force expects to strengthen its technical support to countries, continuing advocacy and policy dialogue (including setting-up a website and e-network) and facilitating North-South-South partnerships in order to further develop the knowledge base on teachers. Mr Kunaefi said that teacher provision was an issue that would remain a major challenge in the EFA global effort in the foreseeable future and reminded participants that it is incumbent upon EFA partners to contribute actively to ensuring that the right of every child and learner to a teacher be fulfilled.

- **Progress report on the EFA-FTI**

Ms Carol Bellamy, EFA-FTI Board of Directors, presented progress on the EFA-FTI, a partnership created in 2002 to support countries in achieving EFA. The initiative is currently being reformed in order to improve equity and mutual accountability, and to address the financing gap. The aim is that the EFA-FTI be more results-based and better aligned with national priorities. The Secretariat must also be strengthened and include adequate representation of partner countries. The EFA-FTI partnership has revised the previously very strong role of the World Bank and is now giving a more important voice to partner countries. This is of great importance, since the largest funders of education are countries themselves. Ms Bellamy said that the EFA-FTI should pay more attention to teacher issues and school feeding programmes. Innovative approaches to bring in more financing are being explored, such as through public-private partnerships and debt swaps for education. Ms Bellamy also mentioned UNESCO's renewed work in this area, as well as that of the Leading Group on

Innovative Financing which recently created a Task Force on Innovative Financing for Education.

Presentation of the Key Findings of the 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR)

Mr Kevin Watkins, Director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, presented key findings of the “2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the marginalized”.

After the presentation participants underlined the magnitude of the financing gap and the need for a holistic and consistent perspective regarding education. Governments should be more prudent in using existing funds and should increase education budget allocations. Although most countries have not cut their education budgets, further expenditure and corruption should be vigilantly monitored to see that financial commitments are met. The need for a pledging conference to raise additional funds was also expressed.

Questions were asked concerning how best to plan during the economic downturn. It was agreed that measurable and achievable results must be defined, coupled with efforts to implement programmes and to monitor and measure results. Having learned from successful experience, countries should focus on practical strategies towards achieving the EFA goals before 2015.

Education must be viewed within the entire human and economic development agenda and should take into account the needs of individual countries. Joint action with other sectors such as health, environment and labour is crucial and support should exist for different education sub-sectors and issues. For example, greater attention should be given to post-primary education, improving the quality of teachers, literacy and curriculum issues. Given the crisis, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in particular should be strengthened, due to its link with the labour market.

The GMR presentation also reminded participants that education is still not prominent on the agenda of high-level meetings, including the G-8 or G-20 Summits. It was generally agreed that UNESCO should take the lead in enhancing effectiveness of the EFA international coordination structure, which requires full support from EFA partners at global, regional and country levels.

Plenary Discussion I: Impact of the Economic and Financial Crisis on Education

Co-chairs

- Ms Elizabeth King, Education Director, Human Development Network, World Bank
- Mr Kalidou Diallo, Minister of Pre-school, Primary and Middle Secondary Education, Senegal

Panelists:

- Mr Jean-Pierre Ezin, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology Department, African Union Commission
- Mr Samson Kegeo Onger, Minister of Education, Kenya
- Ms Barbara Ischinger, Director for Education, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

This plenary session was devoted to the impact of the economic crisis on education. Participants expressed their concern that if funds are diverted from education to address poverty, hunger and other issues, the impact would be dramatic. Since the positive impact of education on economic development has been proven, countries and donors should focus on securing funds to ensure that educational systems remain in place, knowing that in the long-term this is how to finance continued national growth. Several participants went as far as to say that the economic downturn would not have occurred had countries paid more attention to the sustainability and quality of their education systems.

The crisis has aggravated the persistent structural problems of Africa. The African Union and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) commissioned a study on the impact of the crisis, which stressed that national policy-makers should invest in key development areas, including education. The study showed that most economies which had invested in these areas of growth - including education - were less affected by the crisis in the long run. Other issues were also stressed: the need to increase national education budgets, to make investment more attractive to other partners such as public-private partnerships, to make donor support to Africa a priority and to create innovative approaches such as South-South cooperation.

The crisis should not serve to justify decreased resources for education. On the contrary, governments should double their efforts in the current global climate to safeguard the hard-won gains in education over the last decade. For example, China expanded domestic demand for education and addressed marginalization through greater investment in rural areas, support to persons with disabilities, to minorities and children of migrant workers, through school nutrition programmes, school construction and teacher incentives.

Even the budgets of OECD member countries were affected by the crisis. A survey undertaken by the OECD showed how regions and federal levels of education were impacted. Budget cuts affected higher education and other areas, such as TVET. The public education system (and in particular education budgets) in many OECD countries will face greater constraints as members of the work force decide to pursue more education and training opportunities. For this reason private sector support should be explored. Public service jobs, such as those in the teaching profession, could become more attractive following a decrease of jobs in the private sector, for which education systems need to be prepared. Based on the current international initiative “Médecins sans frontières”, a similar initiative could perhaps be started for teachers, e.g. “Teachers without borders”, to encourage their work in other countries and contexts. The current strategy of many countries to pay less attention to the quality of education, will inevitably impact its standard. A larger share of ODA should be allocated to education and innovative funding should be explored.

High-Level Panel Discussion: “Coordinated Timely Educational Responses to Emergencies: the Haiti example”

Moderator: Mr Maker Mwangu Famba, Minister of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Panelists:

- Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO
- Mr Ted Chaiban, Director and Representative to Ethiopia, UNICEF
- Ms Kate Webley, Head of Education, Save the Children

Haiti is vulnerable to natural disasters. The country has low human development indicators and half of the population is under 18 years of age. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti severely damaged the basic infrastructure such as school buildings. Appropriate mechanisms need to be put in place urgently and resources must be mobilized to help the situation. Education and humanitarian actors must play a role in addressing the post-conflict education needs, preparedness and relief, and in reducing risk. International NGOs have a major part in this work.

Education must be a part of the restructuring and preparedness response. Rapid reaction and emergency plans must take into account the education factor. Disaster response should include effective coordination between different sectors. Education needs to be in the front line with health and other key sectors. Financial needs must be covered through critical resource mobilization. A post-disaster needs assessment was conducted. The education cluster, led by UNICEF and Save the Children, focuses on rebuilding and improving the education situation in the short and medium-term. An effort is being made to mobilize temporary learning centres and to distribute learning kits. UNESCO responded to the earthquake in Haiti immediately and is a central partner to the Government and the international community in the education sector response.

A long-term vision of Haiti’s educational needs should be kept in mind. Education must have a larger portion of the humanitarian response. At the moment the sector is only 5 percent of the appeal. The global situation regarding man-made emergencies is not improving. There are lessons to be learned from countries which have been through a similar situation. In 2004 Thailand was struck by a tsunami. Parents, teachers and students worked shoulder-to-shoulder with the Ministry of Education to monitor and protect schools. Disaster-preparedness was streamlined into school curricula. In 2005 there was also an earthquake in Pakistan which resulted in wide-scale migration. Schools were occupied in peaceful areas. There was a long-term response from government, the general public and international agencies to rebuild and refurbish schools.

Plenary Discussion II: Marginalization and Inclusion

Co-chairs

- Mr Matthew Waletofea, Minister of Education and Human Resources Development, Solomon Islands
- Mr Ted Chaiban, Director and Representative to Ethiopia, UNICEF

Panelists:

- Mr Demeke Mekonnen, Minister of Education, Ethiopia
- Mr Sam Egwu, Federal Minister of Education, Nigeria
- Mr Ragnhild Dybdahl, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Norway

This session's discussion was based on the strong sense that unless marginalization in education is overcome, Education for All cannot be for 'All'. The issue is also that of realizing a fundamental human right. Reaching the hard-to-reach populations in both developing and developed countries is a complex issue that has political, social and financial implications. It requires inclusive education systems and policies linked to broader development frameworks, as well as the promotion of targeted strategies. Unit costs per pupil and other associated costs tend to be higher when reaching marginalized populations than for other students. Participants readily agreed that tackling educational marginalization is a way to off-set socio-economic disparities and to create juster, fairer and more inclusive societies.

Experiences shared by representatives from Ethiopia and Nigeria (among many others) demonstrated that political will makes a difference. Through special focus on marginalized groups in its education sector plan, Ethiopia has developed several targeted policies and strategies such as instituting a flexible academic calendar, mother-tongue education and continuing to use alternative ways of bringing education to these populations, including mobile schools for pastoralists and hostels for girls from rural areas. Similarly, Nigeria has also implemented initiatives at several levels of government to target different types of marginalized groups, including measures promoted by the Ministerial Committee on Madrasah, the Nomadic Education Commission and other education committees at sub-regional levels. The Government of Nigeria also promotes mass literacy education through radio and conditional cash transfers for poorer households, and provides mid-day school meals. Moreover, several teacher-training programmes are being strengthened to respond to the diverse needs of children in many parts of the country. Providing the perspective of a donor country, Norway shared aspects of its development policies including how it addresses marginalization, particularly looking at policies and initiatives on girls' education, education in fragile states, in conflicts and disasters, inclusion of marginalized groups and supporting the abolition of school fees.

The need for high-level political will supported by an integrated approach to access, quality and equity was strongly reiterated throughout the open discussion. While the access of marginalized populations to educational opportunities still remains a challenge in all regions and countries, participants were keen to stress the importance of not forgoing quality for quantity. Marginalization, it was said, could be overcome through the promotion of education for social cohesion, which is an important part of "Education for Sustainable Development" (ESD). Participants also noted the critical role that teachers play in addressing marginalization and several presented their initiatives in policy-making, training, improving teachers' status and working conditions and in counteracting inequitable teacher distribution and deployment. The effectiveness of inter-sectoral approaches to education were also emphasized. As the problem of marginalization is deeply rooted in communities, grass-roots level activity was also promoted, such as increasing community involvement and support to schools by establishing school management committees and school action plans.

Adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration

The revised draft Addis Ababa Declaration was presented by Mr Qian Tang. It was adopted with several amendments and will be implemented by EFA partners during the coming months, leading up to the next HLG meeting in Thailand.

Closing session

Ms Irina Bokova closed the HLG meeting by summarizing the key points of discussion. She appreciated the active participation of those present during the Meeting and reminded them of the enormous task ahead to translate the Addis Ababa Declaration into action. Mr Chinnaworn Boonyakiat, the Minister of Education of Thailand which will host the 2011 HLG meeting, expressed his government's willingness to build on this year's momentum and ensure the success of the next HLG meeting. Mr Demeke Mekonnen and Mr Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as representatives of the co-hosts of the HLG meeting thanked participants and reiterated their commitment to the follow-up of the Declaration, in order to achieve a world where "all benefit from quality basic education".

Technical meeting: 25 February 2010

Chaired by Mr Qian Tang, participants in the technical meeting were invited to share their ideas on effective follow-up to the Addis Ababa Declaration, focusing in particular on specific processes and mechanisms, as well as on concrete steps to implement action points.

Follow-up Processes and Mechanisms

It was agreed that the Addis Ababa Declaration should be disseminated to a wider audience (including to those not working in the education sector) in order for it to receive more serious attention and for potential advocacy opportunities and policy debates to be grasped. In addition to the usual dissemination channels, governing bodies of organizations/agencies such as the UNESCO Executive Board could be targeted.

There was broad consensus that the processes and mechanisms of follow-up to the Addis Ababa Declaration should be clear. It was agreed that a matrix indicating concrete follow-up activities, key actors and possible indicators would initially be prepared by UNESCO with input from partners. This will help strengthen accountability by facilitating monitoring processes and preparing a progress report on follow-up, although many participants voiced their concern about the complexity of monitoring the implementation of follow-up activities. How and to what extent countries can be involved in preparing the progress report on follow-up was left to a future discussion. Small countries cautioned on the heavy burden of reporting, while others pointed out existing processes that could be used, such as those of the African Union Commission.

Revitalizing the HLG and underpinning Coordination Architecture

Participants shared ideas about why the HLG and related EFA coordination mechanisms should be reinvigorated. Concern was expressed that the HLG was not making a real

political impact, due in part to the lack of high-level representation from participants, particularly from donor countries and UN agencies, and in part to the nature of the Group which is not sufficiently political. An “EFA fatigue” was referred to, even by those who have only recently become involved. In terms of the agenda, it was agreed that the content must reflect the interest of broad partners in order to maintain interest and commitment. It was also noted that several global education conferences had recently been held, which might have reduced the interest of Ministers participating in the HLG.

Participants made several suggestions regarding the format, frequency, preparation process and overall EFA coordination of the meetings. Some recommended organizing the HLG meeting in conjunction with another major global event. Although the Dakar Framework for Action describes an annual meeting with high-level attendance, several stated that this is no longer the appropriate frequency and that the composition of the Group should also be revised. The importance of giving sufficient time for preparations was emphasized, along with the added value of involving partners in the preparation process from an early stage, as had been the case since the Oslo meeting. In particular, the way the teacher agenda was set for the Oslo HLG meeting by creating an ad-hoc Task Force on Teachers for EFA could be a model, even if not the only one. Moreover the HLG must be better positioned in a broader EFA coordination mechanism with effective linkages with the EFA-FTI, the UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and other initiatives that also require optimal use of existing mechanisms and strong attention to previous recommendations made by the GMR and the HLG. It is worth exploring potential roles that can be played by the other four multi-lateral organizations that convened the World Education Forum in the year 2000 (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank) and other relevant UN agencies (e.g. WFP, WHO, ILO) alongside UNESCO.

Seizing Forthcoming Opportunities

It was agreed that the key messages of the Addis Ababa Declaration should be sent to a wide number of communities to mobilize political momentum and commitments. Many underlined the need to strengthen evidence-based advocacy for greater visibility of EFA. One message that could be used for future advocacy activities is the social and economic cost of not investing in education. Several participants also questioned how to lobby more vigorously for education at country level. Champions of EFA are needed to solicit high-level support.

The High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2010, the so-called MDG Review Summit, as well as other upcoming events such as the G-8 and G-20 Summits, provides an important opportunity to bring a message from the Addis Ababa Declaration. While a draft outcome document for the MDG Review Summit is being prepared by Member States, UNESCO informed participants that it is involved in the preparations for the Summit together with other multilateral organizations; a thematic paper on MDG2 on universal primary education is being developed which will be submitted to the UNDG MDG Task Force led by UNICEF. Participants expressed interest in contributing to the MDG Review Summit preparation by voicing expertise and insights of this HLG group as well as those of the International Advisory Panel on EFA (IAP).

UNESCO assured participants that all suggestions would be brought to the attention of the UNESCO Director-General, who is keen to make the HLG more political and more effective; these suggestions would be discussed further by members of the IAP during their next meeting in early May 2010.

Annex

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**The Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group (HLG) on Education for All
23-25 February 2010
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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