



United Nations
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Organisation
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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Tenth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA)

22-24 March 2011

Jomtien, Thailand

JOMTIEN STATEMENT

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1. We, Ministers, leading officials of multilateral and bilateral organizations, and senior representatives of civil society and private sector organizations, have gathered at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO in Jomtien, Thailand, from 22 to 24 March 2011, for the Tenth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA). We are deeply grateful for the warm hospitality offered by the Government of Thailand. We also wish to express our heartfelt sympathy to the people affected by the recent earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan.

2. Less than four years remain until the 2015 target date. If the current trend continues, we are likely to miss the EFA goals – most of them by a wide margin. In 2008, 67 million children were out of school and 17% of the world's adult population lacked basic literacy skills. We call for urgent and strong commitments – at the national, regional and global levels – to achieving all the EFA goals and full implementation of the right to education.

3. Progress towards the EFA goals is uneven – across both countries and goals. Remarkable advances have been made in primary school enrolment; many countries have a fair prospect of achieving universal primary education. Progress towards the other goals, however, notably early childhood care and education, youth and adult learning, vocational education and training, gender equality and literacy, as well as the quality of education, is far more modest. Children, young people and adults need to acquire the values, knowledge and skills to cope with today's and tomorrow's challenges, particularly at this time of global crisis. We strongly believe that education systems should support lifelong learning from the early years and throughout adulthood with smooth transitions from home to school and on to higher educational levels, as well as from school to the world of work.

4. Access to education and the quality of education are intricately linked, and we insist that there should be no trade-off between the two. Both must be simultaneously assured for learners to actually learn in all educational settings, both formal and non-formal. Curricula must be relevant to the needs of learners and respond to their diversities, and systems should be put in place to monitor and measure learning outcomes. Additional forms of educational delivery such as ICTs need to be explored. Higher education and research play a critical part in improving the quality of education. Sufficient numbers of qualified, well-resourced and motivated teachers are crucial to ensuring access and quality alike. We urge governments to take the lead in strategic and participatory processes to develop legislative frameworks and implement comprehensive national policies supporting teachers through training, professional development and working conditions such as will enable them to deliver quality teaching and learning.

5. Ensuring equity in education is another challenge that we must take up. Progress towards EFA is thwarted by inequalities caused by different types of disadvantages and discrimination associated with gender, income, location, nationality, disability, language, race and ethnicity. Women and girls continue to face significant obstacles: nearly two thirds of 796 million adults without basic literacy skills in 2008 were women. Gender stereotypes and disparities, especially at secondary level, reproduce social and economic injustices, disproportionately impair both the wage-earning capacity of girls and their country's progress in health and education outcomes overall. Furthermore, early marriage, HIV/AIDS and persisting child labour prevent countries from achieving the EFA goals. We commit ourselves to strengthening successful measures such as cash transfers and school feeding, to exploring innovative approaches to social protection programmes, and to mobilizing resources to this end.

6. We urge national governments, with which the principal responsibility rests, supported by parliamentarians, to allocate at least 6% of GNP and/or at least 20% of public expenditure to education, and to ensure cost-effective use of resources, in line with the Addis Ababa Declaration. We call on the international community to deliver on its political and financial commitments, including replenishment of the EFA Fast-Track Initiative (FTI), and to fill the estimated US \$16 billion financing gap in order to achieve core EFA goals in low-income countries.

7. We can no longer turn a blind eye to the urgent need to protect education in conflict-affected and disaster-affected countries. Schools are targeted by combatants, and schoolchildren, especially girls, and female teachers, are particularly vulnerable in violent conflict situations. More effective monitoring systems in regard to human rights violations affecting education are required. Education can also play a significant part in building peace in fragile contexts when it communicates tolerance and mutual respect. We therefore appeal to the international community to support education in conflict situations and fragile contexts as an integral part of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, and to give it far greater priority in financing requests and delivery.

8. The participation of civil society and other stakeholders, including young people, in decision-making and in monitoring implementation of the right to education must be fostered and strengthened at all levels, including locally. Civil society organizations must be seen as legitimate social actors, given that social participation is a right in and of itself and so recognized by international human rights instruments.

9. A significant body of evidence shows that investing in education leads to sustainable development and promotes human security. The centrality of education to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be fully recognized. The knowledge and skills that people acquire through education empower them and expand their possibilities, which can lift them out of poverty. The benefits of quality education include better health, more active civic participation in building democratic societies, greater environmental awareness and increased productivity, to name but a few. More than 60 years have gone by since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed that elementary education should be free and compulsory. We are individually and collectively responsible for granting this fundamental human right to girls and boys as well as to women and men across the world.

10. The international community must seek harmonized collaboration and new partnerships, including South-South and South-North-South cooperation, partnerships with the private sector and civil society, as well as innovative financing for education that includes the marginalized. We request UNESCO to pursue its reform to enhance the effectiveness of EFA coordination jointly with the other EFA convening agencies.

11. Here in Jomtien, where delegates from 155 countries adopted the World Declaration on EFA just over 20 years ago, we reaffirm our commitments to achieving the EFA goals. Let us now join hands and substantially hasten our efforts in that pursuit.