



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Organisation  
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Organización  
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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Statement by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the High-Level Education Event  
“Keeping our promises on Education”**

*Delivered on his behalf by Mr Marcio Barbosa*

*Deputy Director-General of UNESCO*

**Brussels, Belgium, 2 May 2007**

Education is everyone's business and this is especially true in the case of basic education, which is foundational for all other learning. UNESCO applauds the United Kingdom, the World Bank and the European Commission for organizing this meeting and inviting a broad range of stakeholders and partners who share a common concern – how best to ensure that the educational needs of the world's children are met by 2015.

We are here today to raise the level of action to address this challenge, especially by committing more resources with greater speed and effectiveness to the education-related Millennium Development Goals and the broader objectives of Education for All.

The shape of the challenge has been clear for some time: international aid to education has not matched the commitment made at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 that no country should be thwarted in its efforts to achieve Education for All merely for lack of funding. Despite recent pledges, there are worrying trends that point to a decline in aid to basic education, particularly to the poorest countries.

Meanwhile, countries with a serious commitment to basic education are calling for more sustained and more predictable aid, aligned with national education plans. The long-term nature of education demands a corresponding answer from bilateral and multilateral donors in support of national efforts.

Not only must we increase aid; we must also ensure that money is spent on the right things, and that it is spent well.

Spending money on the right things involves clear priorities and careful choices. Recent progress towards the education-related MDGs and the EFA goals, and in particular in primary school enrolments, means that the remaining challenge concerns parts of the population that are harder to reach. We must therefore ensure that adequate resources go to children who need special attention – girls, minorities, indigenous peoples, street children, AIDS orphans and many more who have not yet had a realistic chance to get an education. Equally, we must focus on the quality of schooling, and indeed of learning of all kinds. By ensuring adequate quality, we will not only raise the level of attendance and learning outcomes, but also increase the efficiency of the system.

In spending money well, it is important to aim not merely at good schooling, but at a learning society where levels of skill and initiative are constantly on the rise. Spending must therefore be aligned with the priorities of each national context. The 2006 and 2007 editions of the EFA Global Monitoring Report make it plain that investment in early childhood care and education and primary schooling and adult literacy constitutes the best strategy to raise educational levels. Given the inadequacy of school systems in some contexts, the learning needs of out-of-school adolescents also merit urgent attention.

While UNESCO is not a donor, we are committed to promoting innovative ways of mobilizing resources, such as through the newly established South-South Cooperation Programme/Fund for Education, through UNESCO's work on debt swaps for education, and through the 'Partnership for Education' initiative we have developed with the World Economic Forum. We are also actively engaged in the EFA-FTI partnership, a key instrument for aligning external financing with national educational priorities.

Partnership is the key to success in education. To this end, I commend to you the EFA Global Action Plan – the product of collaboration between UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank – as an over-arching framework for coordinated support to achieve the EFA goals.

In conclusion, I am heartened by the commitment shown at this meeting – I hope that we shall look back at this event in 2015 as a turning point in our collective determination to achieve both the education-related MDGs and the EFA goals.