



EU High Level Conference on
Education and Development
From Challenges to Opportunities

Brussels, 23 May 2013

Conference Report

Executive Summary

On 23 May, 2013, the European Union hosted a high-level international conference¹ to discuss the global opportunities and challenges in education and development. Since 2000, the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals have created an advocacy and strategic environment for advancing national education reform. As the 2015 target date approaches, there is recognition that significant challenges remain to be addressed. There is an on-going dialogue among governments, development partners and education specialists around the unfinished work of the MDGs and how to ensure provision of quality and relevant education in the years to come.

Hosted by EU Commissioner Piebalgs, the EU Conference on Education and Development moved the international debate forward in the lead-up to the September 2013 UN General Assembly which will address the achievements of the MDGs and start to frame a post-2015 development agenda.

The EU conference addressed two specific objectives:

- specific ways to support those countries most off-track from international education goals, using field-based and research experience; and
- raising the importance of equitable and quality learning and establish links to poverty reduction and sustainable development in the broad post-2015 development agenda.

Achieving the MDGs: unfinished business

The day's discussion made clear that there is much left to do to meet the current education goals, both in terms of reaching those children still not accessing education and in improving the quality of education as fundamental to broader development objectives. Key conclusions include:

- To **ensure equitable access for all children** it is pivotal to include ways to stimulate demand for school, get children into school at the right age, and reduce the multiple barriers to access for marginalized communities.
- **Improving the quality of education** so that children are learning when in school is now a top priority for all stakeholders supporting education. Speakers called for a **stronger global movement** to push for progress in getting children in to school and giving them the opportunity to learn. Strengthening national education systems, including increasing the pool of well-trained teachers, is a priority for action. Education partners must be accountable for the quality of education, including through the development of metrics to measure learning.
- **Communities** must play a central role in developing solutions to inequity in access and learning. Governments need to engage communities to increase their sense of ownership of their schools, to make sure their children attend and do not drop out and to ensure a degree of local

¹ All related documents can be consulted on the Conference webpage:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/fromchallenges2013_en.htm

accountability for what happens at school. Development partners have a role to play in learning lessons on what approaches have worked well, including during emergencies.

- Education needs to be addressed more effectively in humanitarian emergency situations and in the transition to longer term development. **Education in emergencies** is an essential investment, despite the many competing priorities faced at such times. Education can also be seen as the link between humanitarian and longer term development, and therefore needs systematic work to prepare for the post-crisis transition.
- **Schools play a critical role in state building** and ensuring peaceful transition from conflict. Reaching the MDGs for education will require more funding and joined up approaches to education in emergencies, which accounts for many of the children who are currently out of school.
- Education is currently facing a **financing crisis** at the global level and in country budgets for reaching the 2015 goals. This is an issue that governments themselves need to address and prioritise, but the international community must ensure the necessary level of support. In humanitarian situations education is severely underfunded (about 3% of total humanitarian aid).

Education in the post-2015 development agenda

The conference discussions recognised the important role played by existing international goals in galvanising and focusing support for education. The discussion focused on **the role of education in the post-2015 development agenda**, capturing a wide range of issues. Some of the key conclusions were:

- Education should be at the **centre of a global development agenda** because of the contribution it makes to many development areas, including employment, health, environmental sustainability, peace building and food security. Education also contributes to broader democratic governance and citizenship.
- Education is a fundamental **human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights**, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; this should underpin any new framework.
- There is a need for a **global education goal**; one that fosters local action. There are a complex range of issues at national level. We need a simple global framework that enables countries to adapt these goals based on national priorities. Global education goals should include a focus on literacy and the basic skills children need to learn, while recognising that education has to meet broader social and individual needs in terms of more advanced skills, knowledge and values.
- A goal for education will mean nothing without **adequate funding**; financing for education needs to be monitored nationally and globally, but how this should be included in a future framework needs further discussion.

Final conclusions and EU commitments

The conference covered a broad range of issues and involved many different partners. It made an important contribution to building consensus among the international community and national governments around global priorities for action. In the context of a global economic crisis, with pressures on spending in so many countries, there was a clear message from this conference that education is central to economic growth, political stability, and social development. Building on some areas of good progress, there is a need for a step change in efforts to achieve education goals and to look at new and innovative ways to do this.

The global political momentum and support can be continued including:

- Development partners should **support national governments in their push to meet the MDGs**, including through the specific country programmes, the Global Partnership for Education, the Global Education First Initiative or other joint initiatives. The EU will be an active supporter of this work both at the global level and directly through its country programmes.
- Increase the attention and funding given to **education in emergencies**. From the EU, more proactive collaboration between humanitarian and development programmes will be sought wherever possible, recognising the need for more joined up approaches to crisis planning and addressing education during extended periods of transition and reconstruction.
- **Financing to education** both globally and nationally needs to be monitored through existing agency mechanisms with sustained advocacy to maintain the pressure on all governments to prioritise spending on education, despite the pressure for cuts.
- The **focus on learning outcomes** can be supported through various initiatives, including the work of the Learning Metrics Taskforce, the International Taskforce on Teachers for EFA and other collaboration between governments, development agencies and practitioners to share knowledge. South-south cooperation could be fostered, including for community-based approaches to education.
- In terms of the **post-2015 development framework**, the conference messages provide further basis for partners to undertake advocacy work up to and during the September meeting of the UN General Assembly.

In response to the conference conclusions, the EU Commissioner for Development outlined in his closing remarks the specific **role for the European Union**. Education will remain a strong part of the overall EU development framework beyond 2015; it is anticipated that €2.5 billion will be mobilised in support of basic education and TVET in the 2014-2020 period. An additional €1.5 billion will support the EU Higher Education cooperation and mobility programme. The EU will seek to ensure that by 2030 every child completes at least basic education and has basic literacy and numeracy skills. The EU will seek a coordinated approach among development partners and partner countries to increase efficiency, build resilience in education systems and improve education outcomes. This includes continuing to support the Global Partnership for Education. The Commissioner also committed to continue to raise the importance of education in forthcoming dialogue and negotiation around a **new global development framework**.

1. Introduction

In fewer than 1000 days, the world will reach the target date set for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals. The goals have formed the basis of a major period of global action to improve education outcomes for children and young people around the world. The international education community has been deliberating on the challenges remaining to improve access and quality education for all, through a series of global events and consultations. These events aim to inform the upcoming September 2013 UN General Assembly meeting, during which member states will debate and shape the broad post-2015 development agenda.

The European Union convened the *EU Conference on Education and Development: Challenges and Opportunities* at an opportune time to build on these global discussions ahead of the upcoming General Assembly.

The EU conference addressed two specific objectives:

- specific ways to support those countries most off-track from international education goals, using field-based and research experience; and
- raising the importance of equitable and quality learning and establish links to poverty reduction and sustainable development in the broad post-2015 development agenda.

The conference provided a high-level platform for exchange and dialogue among partner countries, education experts and development partners about the priorities in education now and beyond 2015. The organisation of the conference and the diversity of panellists and invitees ensured that the education debate was relevant to the on-going global debate on international education goals. The strong moderators and the dynamic structure of the panels allowed for much interaction from the conference participants and exchanges among panellists. Nearly 200 people attended this event in Brussels, including 68 ministers of education or their representatives from partner countries, 4 European Commissioners, 25 representatives from donor agencies, 25 from international NGOs, and 2 high-level youth representatives, and media and press (see annex for participant list). Special guests included Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, and Her Royal Highness Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development.

This conference report summarizes the proceedings of the three main sessions (Opening Session, Panel 1 and Panel 2). It sets out some key conclusions from the day and pledges from the Commissioner for Development on future EU actions.

2. Highlights from Opening Session

The conference was hosted by the EU Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, and opened with a number of short speeches from high level speakers and youth advocates along with a short film from

Somalia² showing the work of an EU project to get girls into school and to hear the views of students and teachers on education. These opening words framed the purpose of the day, stressing the continuing scale of the challenges being faced in delivering education to all children and young people, and the vital importance of education in ending poverty and contributing to peaceful and prosperous societies.

Despite the progress that has been made, it was recognised that the current situation remains unacceptable with so many children denied access to education. Speakers called for a **stronger global movement to press for progress** in getting children in to school and giving them the opportunity to learn. A number of speakers stressed the need to listen to the young people of the world and highlighted that there is already an emerging global movement among the youth in many countries.

The EU Commissioner for Development, **Andris Piebalgs**, opened the conference and set out the aims for the day; first, to look at how countries, with support from international partners, can overcome barriers to equitable and good quality education; and second, to reflect on how we can secure a strong place for education in the on-going debate around the post-2015 global development framework. The Commissioner emphasised the importance of education to the EU development programme and its central place in poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Catherine Ashton (EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) highlighted that whatever the reason for conflict and other challenges, children need to be in education. The world faces a number of humanitarian crises, during which schools may be destroyed, families displaced and children traumatised, living in camps and with no idea of what their future holds. The current crisis in Syria is the centre of global attention, where thousands of children are crossing the borders every day. With opportunities to learn in schools, they will deal better with the challenges they face. They will be more likely to succeed in life. She referred to “Education in a suitcase”: that is wherever we are, it should be provided. It should be part of what we do.

Gordon Brown’s challenge to the conference (as the UN Special Envoy for Global Education) was that Governments cannot continue to deny education the resources it needs and that this is not the time to cut resources for education. Education is not just a moral right and an individual opportunity; it is the only way to break the cycle of poverty in the modern world. The world is facing an education emergency, with 61 million children not going to school; around 500 million girls won’t complete their basic education, and over a billion in the workforce are without qualifications beyond primary school. He challenged the conference to advocate in their home countries for governments to do their part to address this.

Irina Bokova (Director-General of UNESCO, via video message) reinforced the need to accelerate progress and make new efforts to reach the most marginalised children that remain out of school. Non-formal education is a solution to widening access in many areas. Increasing the role of education in peace-building is also critical to reach children in conflict-affected areas and help rebuild societies.

² http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/fromchallenges2013_en.htm

UNESCO will work with other partners to develop “bold and measurable” outcomes for education for beyond 2015.

Chernor Abdulai Bah (Chair of the Youth Advocacy Group of the Global Education First Initiative) gave voice to their concerns; with less than 1000 days to go until the MDG target date, it is an outrage that so many children are still denied this basic opportunity. There will in fact be an event in September at the UN bringing over 500 young people to press the world’s leaders to make education a reality for all children. Malala Yousafzai, the 15-year-old Pakistani student and activist, was cited as an inspiration to this movement and for the need to stand up for the right of all children to a decent education and the opportunities it provides.

Androulla Vassiliou (EU Commissioner for Education and Culture) talked particularly on the importance of literacy in all countries, highlighting the challenges that are faced right now in Europe, with one in five pupils and more than 73 million adults not able to read and write properly. The EU has set up a benchmark to reduce the number of low achievers in literacy to less than 15% of pupils by 2020. Literacy is seen as a crucial element in the European growth strategy, and a literacy campaign has been launched to promote awareness and pressure authorities to do more: Europe Loves Reading. A network of literacy organisations will be set up to share best practice and policy across member states, but which will also be useful for countries outside of the EU. The Commissioner highlighted that no skill is as useful for a child’s future, but also for strengthening democratic society, as the ability to read. This is as true in Europe as the rest of the world.

Her Royal Highness Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands (UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development) highlighted the need to look at new and innovative ways to address the problems, and challenge our very assumptions around literacy and learning. As part of this, perhaps we need to learn from marketing to make education more attractive and use technology and distribution options available to us now that can provide children and adults with the opportunities to learn that did not exist before. Solutions must in part be found through creating self-sustaining learning eco-systems; a local environment for reading, developing an opportunity for writers and for story telling locally. Learning from the private sector, in the way certain global products such as Coca Cola is found in every village, we need to do more to understand the demand for education, how people perceive the relevance of education. The growing demand for ICTs, including mobile phone technology, may hold one of the solutions to this. A global library of reading materials; appealing, accessible, and affordable could be possible through such devices, helping to address the challenges of distribution and could connect children, peers, parents, and teachers across countries.

This opening session set the tone for the day. It can be recognised that good progress has been made to get more children into school, but this is not the time for a business as usual approach. There remains an education crisis around the world; there are risks to achieving the potential of education as governments are cutting back on their investment, yet education makes a vital contribution to economic growth, peaceful and prosperous societies as well as the lives of individual children.

3. Summary of Panel 1 Discussions

Session Title: Building better and more equitable education systems together. On the path to resilient development.

The panel was chaired by Sven Kuehn von Burgsdorff, the EU Ambassador to South Sudan, and panellists were the Ministers of Education from South Sudan and Timor-Leste, Deputy Minister of Education from Sierra Leone, Minister for Development from Denmark, the EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response (ECHO), and the Deputy Executive Director for UNICEF.

There is general recognition that the MDGs have contributed to development in a number of ways and to education specifically through focusing on getting more children in to primary school and closing the gender gap. As the international community and partner countries debate a post-2015 development framework, there is clearly unfinished work and much left to do to ensure all children (including the most marginalised) are in school, acquire relevant skills and competences and actually complete a full schooling cycle.

This session explored some of the ways education systems can respond to national priorities and achieve existing education commitments. The session aimed to learn lessons on how governments, national stakeholders and their development partners can foster the political backing for education reform and how improved governance and management of the sector can achieve more equitable access and improved learning for all children. As part of this, it was highlighted that under the New Deal for Fragile States a priority is to **build national capacity and systems for longer term sustainability and resilience**. The discussion focused on countries furthest from the international education goals; their situation is often compounded by emergencies or conflict situations.

In **addressing the question of priorities**, Ministers and colleagues from a wide number of countries highlighted a range of challenges being faced:

- Most countries see the issue of **recruiting, training and managing good quality teachers** as one of their top priorities. Countries emerging from conflict or other crises have faced particular challenges in this, for example where teachers have left the country (Timor-Leste), or where prolonged conflict saw many teachers die (Cambodia), or a new cadre of teachers not emerge when a generation of children have lost out on their education (South Sudan). Rebuilding an education system requires strategies for recruiting and training a new generation of teachers and strengthening the capacity of teachers continuously over the long term. Teachers play a key role in both increasing access to education and in the quality of education.
- **Expanding basic education access** is still a concern, in particular with high levels of drop out, low attendance, and low levels of learning. Many of these challenges relate to the demand for education, including removing barriers to girls education. If we take an expanded view of access (to include those children who are not attending sufficiently and therefore not learning) then the number of children effectively out of school may be as much as 300 million.

- As countries have expanded primary education provision, enormous pressure is now faced in **completion of primary and ensuring access to secondary education**; with limited infrastructure, insufficient number of teachers, and financing needed for other recurrent and investment costs.
- While it was recognised **school infrastructure** has received significant attention in recent years, this remains in many countries an important challenge, especially where schools have been abandoned or destroyed during war and other emergencies.
- A **learning crisis** was highlighted as a central challenge facing countries and the international community, where children do not learn fundamental skills while they are in school.
- Challenges often exacerbated by conflict and general **lack of capacity affecting service delivery**, especially when designing and developing new education systems (ex. South Sudan)

The interaction between panellists and the audience provided some rich discussion on **how some of these challenges can be or are being addressed**, with the first responsibility relying in governments:

- **Communities** must be engaged and will be central to solving many of the challenges faced in improving schools. More engaged communities have greater ownership of reforms and can find local solutions to the issues of drop out and low attendance. Accountability is more likely to happen at this local level, and interesting work has taken place in recent years around the community role in inspecting schools, using mobile technology to report on schools and teaching. This approach increases ownership and makes it more likely that investments will be sustained. This is also relevant to work in emergencies. As highlighted by the EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, during crises and transitions to a more stable period of development, parents and communities will know what keeps their children in school despite difficult circumstances.
- Solutions also need to recognise **broader demand side constraints**; infrastructure and other resource inputs may be important to ensure access, but will only have an impact where there is demand for education. The barriers on demand include formal costs such as uniforms, as well as the pressure to work on family farms and business or help at the home. Having little trust in the education system also reduces parents' inclination to send children to school. Limited early childhood education opportunities were also cited as a constraint. Addressing these constraints may include stipends/scholarships and other incentives for the marginalised (e.g. in Niger a goat was provided as an incentive to graduate under one programme), information campaigns to raise awareness, and other innovations. The role of teachers is critical in fostering demand for school; the way children are taught, the skills they learn and the attitude of the teacher will determine whether a child stays in school. Ensuring alternative education models is key to motivate out-of-school children to enrol. As part of getting girls to stay in school, ensuring there are female teachers as role models is an important strategy in many countries.
- A key strategy to address current access and quality problems is to address the problem of **over age enrolment and age in grade**. This does not need to cost governments, but requires children entering school at the correct age, and will have a significant impact on learning and completion.

- The education community and governments must be more **accountable for learning outcomes**, and develop suitable metrics to measure learning. Governments and partners should seek and support innovative approaches to increase the level of learning, including for literacy as a fundamental building block for learning.
- **Financing for education** clearly plays an important part in developing long term solutions. The Global Monitoring Report cites an annual shortfall of \$26 billion in external funding, while recognising that the main responsibility for financing is by national governments / domestic budgets. There is pressure for budget cuts at the national level, and there needs to be work to protect spending on education, not least on teachers. The need for external support to use national budgets and public finance systems was raised, alongside the need for strong national plans and systems for monitoring. Financing for teachers requires support for recurrent costs and salaries, not just training. As part of this, governments need to consider strategies for attracting the best people to the profession.
- Solutions should not rely on aid alone; **collaboration between southern countries** can provide important opportunities to share experience. For example, India has experience in the training of teachers including curricula and use of local teachers from communities. It was highlighted that community-based solutions could be shared across countries, perhaps with donor funds to facilitate this.

The meeting recognised the importance of **locally-led capacity development** that fits with national priorities. Some of the issues raised included:

- The international community must continue to look at how **provision of technical support** addresses the needs of national systems and avoids establishing parallel structures. It will be important to find new ways to strengthen capacity, use international advisers effectively, and develop concrete indicators to measure progress.
- One of the specific areas in which this needs to be developed is the **capacity of teachers and teacher management systems**.

Finally, the importance of **providing education in emergencies** and in the transition to longer-term development was highlighted. Some outcomes of the discussion included:

- The panel recognised that providing education in humanitarian and emergency situations requires **greater commitment from the international community**, as education remains underfunded (at around 3% of humanitarian aid). While this is understandable where other lifesaving priorities are so critical (food, shelter), there is a clear need to increase the levels of funding and attention given to education.
- The discussion raised the **possibility of setting targets for funding** education in conflict and emergencies, as part of a broader accountability system. Given the importance of education in such contexts, a possible target would be to reach 7% of humanitarian funding for education.
- Education is seen as the **key link between humanitarian and development assistance**. It is vital that children receive opportunities for schooling in emergencies, including in refugee camps, and that the international community plays a part in providing these local schools. Research

shows that increasing the number of children in school reduces the risk of conflict. There also needs to be quality schooling in home communities to encourage refugees to leave camps and return home when the opportunity arises. Education needs to be guaranteed and protected in situations of emergency and fragility is severely underfunded.

- Investment in education during and following conflict situations is an **effective life-long investment in people and a society**, with strong links to economic development, promotion of democracy and political stability. Particularly in fragile contexts, education can be the link between state and communities.
- **Conflict analysis** must be undertaken to ensure planning and programmes increase resilience of communities in the future. It is also important to have in place conflict and crisis planning within national sector plans, before crises hit. For national disasters, every country is potentially vulnerable and funds spent on preparation will save money and lives in the long run. Such efforts may be an important part of linking the work of development and crisis / humanitarian support.
- Attention was drawn to the **current crisis in Syria**, in which 1.5 million people have now been displaced to neighbouring countries, and over 50% of these are children, the majority of which are not in school. This is a lost generation in the making, if they do not receive an education. When children drop out due to crisis, they are unlikely to go back to school.
- The countries on the panel and others represented in the conference are coming out of fragility and engaged in **peace building**. The discussion highlighted the central role played by schools in state building; bringing the state to the people and communities. Schools are often the first manifestation of a functioning state that communities will see after a period of crisis and are top of their own list of priorities for their children. As an education community it is important to better understand how education can play this role in state building, find more proactive ways to make links with broader development efforts and communicate this more effectively. This builds on the approach set out in the New Deal for Fragile States.

As a member of the panel, Commissioner Georgieva highlighted the EU commitment to these concerns and the need for the EU to act as one family to ensure a coherent approach across programmes and countries. The EU involvement in Syria and neighbouring countries is an example of this. She recognised the critical challenge of losing a generation through such emergencies, where attendance at school and levels of literacy suffer so drastically. She also highlighted that there are good examples of this work supported by different agencies. The EU has supported the restoration of services in northern Mali through its development budget, and has devoted the funds from the Nobel Peace Prize to a legacy project for the education of children affected by conflict. With an increasing global population, and the risk of increasing natural disasters, there is a critical need for improved funding for education in emergencies, and for humanitarian and development communities to work together and to engage with and be accountable to communities for provision of schooling opportunities for all children in these contexts.

4. Summary of Panel 2 Discussions

Panel Title: *The role of education in the post-2015 framework: Reaching equitable and quality learning for all.*

The panel was chaired and moderated by Carol Bellamy, Chair of the Global Partnership for Education. The seven panellists included the EU Commissioner for Development, Ministers of Education from Cambodia and Senegal, the Minister of State for Trade and Development from Ireland, the head of International Affairs at Pearson plc, the President of the Global Campaign for Education, and a member of the Youth Advocacy Group of the Global Education First Initiative.

This Panel discussion first examined how the international education goals have shaped education and development policy at national levels since 2000. The remainder of the discussion used these lessons to reflect upon how to raise the focus on education in the post-2015 development goals, with a particular emphasis on raising national priorities and youth's voice in this global debate.

Ministers of Education from Cambodia and Senegal started off the panel discussion with presentations of the role of the EFA and MDG in improving access to education in their respective countries since 2000. Both systems still face many challenges, including increasing access to marginalized populations, improving the quality and relevance of learning in the classroom and developing teacher training. Yet, the international education goals were important to help the countries develop coherent development policies and galvanize global interest in advancing education for all members of society. Donors focused their activities around the MDGs at the national level, thereby engaging with partner countries in relevant programming.

With the lessons learned since 2000 in mind, the moderator led the panellists and participants to think about the role of education in a new development framework. This provided some rich discussion and the following points emerged:

- Education in the new framework should be defined in the broad sense, using a **holistic life-long learning approach**, running from early childhood through to adulthood. Education planning should be aligned to provide opportunities in formal schooling at all levels, in scientific, technical and vocational training as well as in non-formal interventions.
- The post-2015 education goal should continue the work of the current international education goals, with a **strong focus on equity and quality**. New solutions and innovative service delivery will be needed to reach those children and youth that do not have access to education, including girls, children with disabilities, mobile communities and those living in remote rural areas. Delivering increased equity involves looking beyond access targets to capture the broader, transformative dimensions of education, how quality education can create more autonomous individuals who can contribute to the plurality and prosperity of democratic societies.
- **Non-formal education** has an important role to play in reaching out to marginalized populations and improving equitable access to education, as repeated by youth representatives in the

conference. A non-formal curriculum should aim to develop a holistic person with transferable skills and should go beyond teaching for employment and include broader values.

- **Improving quality** in education requires interventions at many levels, both in and out of the classroom. Some countries will need to adapt to technological changes, and use forward thinking to adapt to education needs over the next development period. Improving local governance and community participation and ownership is important.
- **Quantitative targets** need to be embedded in the post-2015 goal, as they are important to measure progress and challenges especially among marginalized populations. Targets for education quality can be useful at the national level; working towards international standards, such as the work being undertaken by the Learning Metric Task Force, can provide comparability among countries and within regions.
- Several interventions raised the concern that quality education requires **going beyond measurable foundation skills such as numeracy and literacy**. Children and youth need to be taught values (e.g., non-violence, peace, tolerance) and “soft” skills (e.g., critical thinking, decision-making, conflict resolution) to foster a holistic development of the individual within society, providing children and youth with the means to maximize their potential. Education should foster the participation of active citizens. Such learning goes beyond the traditional curriculum and helps foster autonomy and dignity and empowers individuals. Developing quality education in conflict-affected countries will help cultivate equitable democratic structures, as well as a culture of peace and inclusiveness.
- **Teachers** are critical actors in increasing the quality of education. In addition to increasing and renewing the core set of teachers in many countries, government must guarantee that they have access to proper training and are motivated. Countries should foster teachers’ ownership of the education system to increase the learning that takes place in schools.
- In addition to teachers, **communities, civil society and youth** play a central role in developing an education system and governments should enable an inclusive and participatory process for this. Parents need to be able to trust the quality of an education system to increase access and participation of their children.
- Education as a **fundamental human right** should be reaffirmed in the new goal.

The discussion around **the role of the international education goals** recognised the utility of such goals for mobilizing international resources, heightening education-focused advocacy, but also for focusing national actors to work towards a coherent set of targets. Yet, financing fell short for meeting the MDGS and the new development goals will need a stronger commitment from both governments and donors on financing. Several points emerged on this issue:

- **A stronger commitment to financing the education goals** needs to come from partner countries, donors, and to some extent emerging funding sources (e.g., business, philanthropy). Countries need to increase or maintain domestic resource mobilisation and spending on education, depending on national circumstances. Similarly, donor countries need to increase development assistance to meet international agreements and expectations.

- The **private sector** will be more engaged in these development goals, but need to be included as an investment partner. Business can work with education to increase the relevance of education to the labour market. In terms of its financial contribution a key role for the private sector is in its contribution to growth and the economic base for development.
- External assistance should be based on **education priorities set by national governments** and other national stakeholders. Assistance can also come in the form of partnering with non-governmental organizations for technical capacity and service delivery.

The meeting also recognised that how **education goals are integrated into the broader development framework** will affect their relevance to national goals.

- **Education is critical to many development concerns**, and contributes to the broad vision that is being shaped for the post-2015 development agenda. This requires thinking about other important development concerns such as governance, environmental sustainability, including health, employment, conflict and food security. The current discussion around the convergence of poverty reduction and sustainable development goals into one development agenda underscores the value of education.
- International goals will still require a **local application** based on national priorities to adapt to national and sub-national circumstances, culture and identity.

5. Conclusions

As a global forum with wide participation from different countries, the conference generated many messages around **national priorities** and the efforts that are making or will make a difference. Countries face many challenges in delivering quality education to all children, and while these vary, as do contexts and environments, there is a remarkable degree to which such challenges are shared. The solutions need to be found in ways that are **locally relevant**.

As we approach the target date of 2015, those countries still facing challenges in reaching the targets require increased support and more focused national efforts. Developing an international education framework beyond 2015 will continue the work of the previous development period and build upon progress made. The post-2015 development agenda is the subject of global dialogue, and among education specialists, a consensus appears to be forming around **three basic priorities: access, equity and quality**. An education goal will need to help translate these into meaningful policies and targets at the national level to be relevant for all countries.

In looking at the challenges faced by countries and some of the ways they can be addressed, conclusions emerging from the day's discussion included:

- There are many specific challenges in **ensuring equitable access** for all children. Some important solutions were presented from the floor: these included ways to stimulate demand for school, the need to get children into school at the right age, the use of non-formal education as a transition and reducing multiple barriers to access for marginalized communities. Country



governments and local partners, with support from the international community, need to continue such efforts and ensure adequate financing.

- **Improving the quality of education** so that children are learning when in school is now a top priority for all stakeholders supporting education. Teachers are of critical importance to this. Children will only enrol and stay in school and learn if the teaching is relevant and engaging. Increasing the pool of well-trained teachers is a priority for partner action. Education partners must be held accountable for the quality of education, with more focus on managing and training the workforce. For example, accountability for the quality of learning can be measured using the international commitment to common standards produced by the Learning Metrics Task Force.
- **Communities** must play a key role in developing solutions to equity in access and learning. Governments need to engage communities to increase their sense of ownership of their schools, to make sure their children attend and do not drop out and to ensure a degree of local accountability for what happens at school. Development partners have a role to play in facilitating community engagement and learning lessons on what approaches have worked well, including during emergencies.
- The conference discussions found a high level of agreement that schools play a critical role in **state building and ensuring peaceful transition from conflict**. National governments and donors should prioritise education during reconstruction.
- **Education in emergencies** is an essential investment, despite the many competing priorities that governments and international agencies face at such times. Indeed, education could be seen as the link between humanitarian and longer term development, and therefore needs systematic work to ensure education systems are prepared for periods of crisis and can be actively contributing to the transition out of crises. Reaching the MDGs for education will require a more effective and joined up approach to education in emergencies, which accounts for many of the children who are currently out of school.
- Sustainable solutions to the challenges identified at this conference, including from external technical and financial support, need to be focused on **National government leadership** and functioning national delivery systems.
- There is a **shortfall in financing** both at the global level and in country budgets for reaching the 2015 goals, but also for education in development. This is an issue that governments themselves need to address and prioritise, but we as the international community must ensure the necessary level of support, linked to well-formulated national plans and priorities. In humanitarian situations we recognised that education is severely underfunded and needs to receive a larger share of humanitarian assistance budgets.

In looking forward to a future development framework, conclusions drawn from the day's discussion include:

- Education should be at the **centre of a global development agenda** because of the links to many development areas, including employment, health, environmental sustainability, peace building

and food security. Education also contributes to broader democratic governance, and the values that are fostered through teaching are a part of this.

- The right to **education is also a basic human right**, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; this should underpin any new framework.
- There is a need for a **global education goal**, but which fosters local action. There are a complex range of issues at national level. We need a simple global framework and goal; one which enables countries to adapt these goals based on national priorities. Global goals should include a focus on literacy and the basic skills children need to learn.
- A goal for education will mean nothing without **adequate funding**; however it is not clear how this should be included in a future development framework.

The conference covered a broad range of issues and involved many different partners. This was not a forum to determine how different development agencies will follow up, but it made an important contribution to building consensus among the international community and national governments around global priorities for action. Ways in which this work could be pursued in coming months include:

- Development agencies should **support national governments in their push to meet the MDGs**, including through the Global Education First Initiative, specific country programmes under the Global Partnership for Education or other joint initiatives. The EU will be an active supporter of this work both at the global level and directly through its country programmes.
- Increase the attention and funding given to **education in emergencies**. From the EU, more proactive collaboration between humanitarian and development programmes will be sought wherever possible, recognising the need for more joined up approaches to crisis planning and addressing education during extended periods of transition and reconstruction.
- **Financing to education** both globally and nationally needs to be monitored through existing agency mechanisms with sustained advocacy to maintain the pressure on all governments to prioritise spending on education, despite the pressure for cuts.
- The **focus on learning outcomes** can be supported through various initiatives, including the work of the Learning Metrics Taskforce, the International Taskforce on Teachers for EFA and other collaboration between governments, development agencies and practitioners to share knowledge. South-south cooperation could be fostered, including for community-based approaches to education.
- In terms of the **post-2015 development framework**, the conference has provided a further basis for all agencies to undertake advocacy work up to and during the September meeting of the UN General Assembly. Furthermore, the education community and specific agencies can be more proactive in engaging with other sectors or areas of development, showing the direct contribution of education to broader development outcomes.

In response to the concerns and priorities covered at this conference, the EU Commissioner for Development outlined **the role of the European Union** in the coming years in his closing remarks. Some key commitments included the following:

- Education will remain a strong part of the overall EU development framework beyond 2015, with a specific emphasis on improving equity and quality.
- The EU has made a firm commitment to human development and social inclusion in the development budget and anticipates mobilising €2.5 billion in support of basic education and TVET programmes in the 2014-2020 period. An additional €1.5 billion is expected to be allocated to support the EU Higher Education cooperation and mobility programme.
- The EU will seek to ensure that by 2030 every child completes at least basic education and has basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- The EU will work with partner countries and development partners – and other actors such as the private sector and youth representatives – to ensure a coordinated approach for improving results, increasing resilience in education and aligning support with national education plans. This includes continuing to support the Global Partnership for Education and working on international aid effectiveness strategies.
- The EU will continue to help education play a critical role in state-building and peaceful transitions from conflict, by linking the humanitarian and longer-term development. The EU will seek increased collaboration between humanitarian and development programmes.
- The Commissioner will continue to raise the importance of education in forthcoming dialogue and negotiation around a new global development framework, with a need to focus efforts on improving quality and equity. This will include his involvement during and after the September meeting of the UN General Assembly.