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Vision and Action

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Note1: To meet UNESCO publishing standards, some editing of papers has been required.

Note2: Authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in signed articles and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

**Speech of Dr Maris O'Rourke
Director of Education**

Mr Director-General of UNESCO, honorable Ministers, distinguished delegates, honorable colleagues, friends. It is my pleasure to address the 1998 World Conference on behalf of the World Bank.

Our vision in the Bank is a **world free from poverty**. That of course requires actions which help produce people who know and can do things, and societies who care for one another. And that means **education**.

The World Bank is the single largest external source of financing for education in the world. Since 1963, we have **lent \$26.8 billion for 610 projects in 116 countries**. In this last year alone, we **lent \$3 billion** for education and our client countries currently have **84** programs under implementation in **87** countries covering an ongoing World Bank portfolio of over **\$12 billion**. And yet this is **less than 0.5 %** of what is spent on education in the world. 63% comes from *governments*, 35% comes from the *private* sector in its very broadest sense and only 2% from *external financing* sources.

So we are very aware that anything that is going to be achieved is through you with, we hope, the help of partners such as the World Bank. We, of course, don't think 50 years is enough!

It is through **partnerships** that we will solve the problems facing us right now and it is through partnerships that we will cope with the **major challenges in tertiary education** - the financial constraints; the increasing numbers; the crisis of quality and relevance; the inequality of access; the technology push. None of us can do this alone. We all have a place in this; a role to play; a comparative advantage; something to add. We must not see ourselves as competitors but as collaborators and co-operative partners. And here I would like to pay tribute to **UNESCO** and the dynamic process that has occurred over the last few years country by country, region by region, culminating in this remarkable coming-together and global sharing which we in the World Bank are very glad to be part of.

In the World Bank our mission in education is to **assist clients to use resources wisely and fairly**, to **build stronger institutional capacity** and, most importantly, to **improve access to relevant learning opportunities for all**.

Much has been said, especially in the last few days, about **equitable access** to tertiary education and the importance of continued learning. But if you are poor, a girl, and didn't complete school, or didn't even go to school, how can we realistically talk about equity, especially for the millions of adult illiterates in the world - many of them women. **Equity has to start early** with early childhood programmes for parents and young children; with school health interventions; with basic education; with **education for all, through all** - that is the still unrealized dream we all signed up to in Jomtien in 1990 and DAC goals since. I have been impressed with the real leadership a few tertiary systems are showing as they try to address these substantive social issues because this is a critical role for tertiary education. What my colleague from UNDP said bears repeating:

"The resourceful web of talent and knowledge in other tertiary institutions must be better directed and utilized in the service of improving educational opportunity at the basic and secondary levels; particularly in local areas and communities".

Equity is also about expectations and demonstrating that it is possible for women of minority groups to succeed, to be mentored through and for example to lead, speak, and represent their country or institution at an event such as this. Some of you, a few of you, have done this and I salute you.

Much has also been said about the role of **technology** and its potential - particularly for improving access. However, how to use technology for improving administration and achieving efficiencies and how to include Technology as a subject in the curriculum, especially in secondary, so that people know how to use it well - are both equally important things for the tertiary sector to address. We need answers from you.

If we are to have a ***culture of peace*** we are going to have to do things very differently at every level of education and do away with the artificial divides, for example such as that which currently exists between higher education and VOTech and bring it all together as ***tertiary***.

New paradigms require new language and new behaviours. We need to produce people with a wide set of basic skills and competencies to deal with an uncertain and unknown global future and equally important with a sense of global social responsibility so that we look after each other, and treat each other in a moral and ethical way.

The old ways will not do this, the old curriculum will not do this. ***We must urgently rethink what we do and how we do it.*** As I said we can only do this together. I assure you that we in the World Bank look forward to working with you and being part of the solution - not part of the problem.

Thank you.