Development Partner Cooperation in Support of Education for All: Rationale and Strategies

A Discussion Paper
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. UNESCO was mandated at the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000, to coordinate a global initiative aiming at formulating the strategies and mobilizing the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts in the achievement of the goals and targets of Education for All by the years 2005 and 2015. The following elements should be considered in the design of strategies and resource mobilization: (1) increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education; (2) ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance; (3) providing earlier, deeper and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education; (4) facilitating more effective donor coordination; (5) strengthening sector-wide approaches; and (6) undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards the goals and targets of Education for All, including periodic assessments. UNESCO’s proposals in this respect are outlined in this paper and are supplemented by the strategies for targeting of international assistance. The core recommendations are the following:

2. (1) Increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education: In view of the drastic decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) during the 1990s, member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in particular those with large economies, are urged to translate their expressed commitments into practice and provide increased and targeted assistance to countries most in need. Specifically, DAC member countries should:
   • Double their support for education to constitute a total of $7 billion by 2005, $10.5 billion by 2010 and $14 billion by 2015.
   • Within the foregoing increased overall support for education, significantly increase ODA for basic education from the current $700 million.
   • Fulfil their commitments towards the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and ensure that significant amounts of debt relief are channelled into support for Education for All.
   • Ensure coherence and coordination of all assistance internationally and nationally, and monitor progress towards the fulfilment of the goals of Education for All.
   • Target their assistance to achieve optimal effect, including support for innovative approaches to Education for All, partly built on best practices.

3. A range of alternative sources for mobilization of international resources must also be considered. These include:
   • Former aid recipient countries and non-member countries of DAC/OECD.
   • Private investment financing, in particular the possibility to forge partnerships among the financial services industry, the state and civil society to promote social development and to link private and public finance with public education.
   • Non-governmental organizations, private foundations and large-scale corporate foundations to undertake innovative funding and fund-raising for Education for All, assist in awareness-raising and lobbying together with relevant ministries, and undertake specific education programmes or provide financial or support in kind in fulfilment of the goals and targets of Education for All.

4. (2) Ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance: Predictability depends both upon political will and procedures that take their point of departure in recipient country needs rather than aid-providing country interests. Predictability also depends on recipient country needs.
capacity to absorb and use funding in accordance with nationally defined plans and goals. Aid-providing countries and agencies must, individually and collectively, revisit their conditionality for aid provision and ensure consistency between declared political commitments and actual action. In particular, special soft terms must be applied for education aid in view of its critical role for poverty reduction and sustainable development. With respect to the largest funding agencies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, it is important that social development goals become core objectives alongside macro-economic targets in the establishment of lending programmes. In the total World Bank investment projects, the soft-loan concessional commitments through the International Development Association (IDA) should constitute a comparatively higher proportion than non-concessional IBRD lending.

5. Providing debt relief and/or cancellation for poverty reduction and basic education: In the current situation of declining ODA, it is important to identify innovative financial schemes which can supplement ODA financing. Debt relief and/or cancellation is one mechanism which, together with debt-for-development-swaps, have received strong international attention and political backing. The core notion is that forgiven debt in specific countries would be translated into social development activities, including financial support for Education for All. The various debt relief mechanisms must be enacted with the utmost urgency. Financing of debt relief schemes must be undertaken through the mobilization of new and additional resources, and not be diverted from already declining ODA. Furthermore, the underlying terms of the schemes must be revisited in order to ensure that they truly benefit the countries and their social and educational development. This includes possibly expanding the eligibility criteria in order that larger, including the nine high-population (E9) countries, gain access to the scheme. The criteria must be conditioned on social and human development goals and not, as is currently the case, on short-term macro-economic targets related to the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) (recently renamed Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF)). Finally, countries must be provided with the necessary technical assistance in order for them to produce a national poverty strategy, one of the preconditions for the scheme.

6. (4) Facilitating more effective donor coordination: Effective donor coordination aims at ensuring consistency in goals and strategies adopted by all actors as a basis to promote holistic national development processes and to ensure maximum impact of international assistance. Coherence must be established within and across sectors as expressed in the attempts to link nationally and internationally developed strategies and plans for education with poverty reduction and general development strategies. UNESCO will continue its support of national governments in order to strengthen their capacity to lead coordination of the development partners at the country level. UNESCO also envisages to strengthen its own role internationally through seeking membership of the United Nations Development Group. With respect to Education for All, UNESCO has already begun its coordinating role through the use of national and regional UNESCO offices and, globally, through the establishment of two core bodies which both have representatives of all relevant actors: one is the Working Group on Education for All convened by the Director-General of UNESCO and the other is a high-level policy group on Education for All chaired by the Director-General of UNESCO.

7. (5) Strengthening sector-wide approaches: Sector-wide approaches have been identified as the best alternative or supplementary mode to the kind of fragmented international project support which characterized international development cooperation in earlier decades. These approaches represent at the same time a new working relationship among international agencies, and between agencies and national governments, based on partnerships and policy dialogue; a new framework for development assistance permitting consistency in purposes and means among all partners; and a new instrument for development assistance promoting reforms through agreed operational commitments and devolving greater authority to national governments concerning resource decisions. The existence of a supportive national policy and institutional environment characterized by longer term macro-economic planning, strong government leadership and effective participation of civil society organizations is an absolute precondition to success. Such environments are often insufficient or lacking in aid-recipient countries. The international community must, therefore, work together in the provision of technical assistance to strengthen the human and institutional resource
base in specific countries. It must also, together with national governments, ensure that lessons and best practices in sector-wide approaches are properly communicated and shared among all actors through research, seminar, and other information and communication activities at the country level. Finally, criteria related to the education sector must be used together with the more general macro-economic and political criteria when introducing sector-wide approaches, and alternatives to these approaches must be carefully considered in countries that do not yet have the appropriate pre-conditions.

8. (6) Monitoring of progress towards the goals and targets of Education for All: Monitoring of progress must be made the responsibility of all partners nationally, regionally and internationally. It must be an integral part of national, regional and international plans and a regular activity in the Education for All efforts. It must be based on common output and outcomes indicators that cover all aspects of the multi-faceted Education for All concept, while allowing for national adaptations. Appropriate education management and information systems must be set up at the country level, training programmes must be conducted in undertaking base-line surveys in order to enhance the quality, accuracy and validity of the underlying data used at the country level to monitor progress, and country capacities in general evaluation and monitoring must be strengthened. UNESCO will offer to ensure monitoring of global progress towards the achievement of Education for All through its Institute for Statistics in active cooperation with its partners.

9. Targeting of assistance for optimal use is as important as actual resource mobilization. The current climate of scarce resources has toughened conditionalities and led to a strong focus on aid effectiveness. Reinforced support for government leadership, coherence and coordination of efforts among all development actors have led to a concentration on a more limited group of countries and areas selected for support by development partners, often based on principles of “good” policies. Support for Education for All must, however, be based on inclusion rather than exclusion. As the next step in this strategic Work in Progress, scenarios of packages of support for individual countries will be developed that aim at ensuring both holistic national development and optimal use of external and national funding for self-sustained development purposes.

Development Partner Cooperation in Support of Education for All: Rationale and Strategies

I. CONTEXT

1. The World Education Forum (Dakar, April 2000) reaffirmed the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term (World Education Forum, 2000). The Forum collectively committed itself to attaining the following goals:
   (a) Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
   (b) Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
   (c) Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
   (d) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
   (e) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
   (f) Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.
2. The Dakar Framework for Action is a collective commitment. As stated (§2, p. 8), Governments have an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained. This responsibility, it is argued, can most effectively be met through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by cooperation with regional and international agencies and institutions. The international community is called upon to formulate the strategies and mobilize the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts (§11, p. 9). UNESCO was mandated in Dakar to coordinate this initiative.

3. This paper, which has been developed in an interactive process between UNESCO and its major development partners, outlines UNESCO’s proposed strategies for the six elements listed in the Dakar Framework for this initiative, namely:
   (i) Increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education.
   (ii) Ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance.
   (iii) Providing earlier, deeper and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education.
   (iv) Facilitating more effective donor coordination.
   (v) Strengthening sector-wide approaches.
   (vi) Undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards the goals and targets of Education for All, including periodic assessments.

4. These elements are understood in this paper to aim at both resource mobilization and efficiency improvements. They are discussed based on an understanding that the contribution of the international community must be complementary to that of national governments who bear the main responsibility for the achievement of the EFA goals. In accordance with UNESCO’s international role as a broker and “neutral” adviser of its Member States, the perspective of the paper is that international efforts must serve the interests of the countries and be designed and targeted for their individual, specific needs.

Education for Human Development

5. The EFA goals underline the long-existent and prevailing concerns of the international community that have been expressed in numerous declarations and conventions since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 stipulated free education for all – a goal reaffirmed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. Two of the EFA goals, universal primary education by 2015 and elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, also form part of the recognized international development targets that aim at global poverty reduction through strategies for health and the environment in addition to those for education. Proposed at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, these targets were agreed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996 and have been reaffirmed in the United Nations Millenium Declaration in 2000 (United Nations, 2000).

6. The breadth of the EFA goals is expressed in UNESCO’s current federating objective for its work: globalization with a human face. The EFA goals highlight the downside of globalization, namely marginalization and exclusion of certain population groups, countries and regions that have persisted, even expanded, despite the numerous international declarations and conventions in support of free education for all, equity, social development and poverty reduction. According to the Dakar Framework, currently more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education systems, and the quality of learning and acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies (World Education Forum, 2000). Furthermore, disruptive conditions related to, for example, persistent civil wars and the HIV/AIDS pandemic call for radical innovative rethinking of, or at least a much wider range of approaches to, the teaching and learning process.

7. This situation highlights not only the continued validity of the plea of the late 1980s for structural adjustment with a human face or the need to protect the vulnerable while promoting growth (Cornia et al., 1987), but also the non-enactment of international declarations despite widespread official government support and relative consistency in international thinking on the necessity and benefits of education for development. Investment in human and social capital are now widely accepted as means of creating sustainable development, achieving
poverty reduction and reducing inequalities within and among nations. The relationships between education and improved health, higher productivity, innovation, increased political participation and empowerment is comparatively well established, although many of the precise mechanisms still have to be more clearly understood, particularly because of differences in outcomes in different contexts.

8. Education is also central to the current, pervasive emphasis among the development partners to establish a mutually reinforcing relationship between macro-economic stability and structural reform on one hand, and growth and reduction of poverty and inequality on the other. It is reflected in the outcomes of top-level meetings, such as those of the G8 countries in Cologne in 1999 and the G7 education ministers in Tokyo in 2000 – the latter including the participation of the Director-General of UNESCO – at which investment in lifelong learning, education and skills was placed at the core of the development of future knowledge-based societies. “Education and skills are indispensable to achieving economic success, civic responsibility and social cohesion”, it is stated in the 1999 Cologne charter. The G8 leaders in Okinawa, partly as a result of several interactions between UNESCO and the Presidency of G8 in preparation of the meeting, agreed to, according to their communiqué:

follow up vigorously the conclusions of the recent Dakar conference on Education for All by ensuring that additional resources are made available for basic education. ... We reaffirm our commitment that no government seriously committed to achieving Education for All will be thwarted in this achievement by lack of resources. ... [And] ... to strengthen efforts bilaterally and together with international organizations and private sector donors to achieve the goals of universal primary education by 2015 and gender equality in schooling by 2005.

9. The leaders also called on international financial institutions, in partnership with developing countries, to focus on education in their poverty reduction strategies and to provide greater assistance for countries with sound education strategies. “These strategies should maximise the potential benefits of I[nformation] T[echnology] in this area through distance learning wherever possible and other effective means”, the leaders stressed.

10. Thus, while education’s central role in development efforts seems to be undisputed and backed by high-level political commitment in the case of Education for All, not all EFA goals seem to carry the same weight. In the wider development targets and in the statements of the G8 countries, the basic education concept has been narrowed to universal primary education and gender equality. It is important to remind ourselves of the wider basic education concept that underlies the discussion in this paper.

The Financial Challenge of Achieving Education for All

11. In its Global Action Plan (GAP), Oxfam (Watkins, n.d.) identified a funding gap of an additional $7-8 billion per year to achieve high-quality universal primary education by the year 2015. The validity of this figure is questionable as a definite target for national and international resource mobilization for Education for All because the basis of its calculation is obscure and because it is set against achieving only universal primary education. However, the figure does provide some indication of current thinking of the financial needs for education while other work is ongoing, for example in UNESCO and the World Bank, to determine actual resource gaps in specific national contexts. Meanwhile, the sheer numbers of out-of-school children and illiterate adults alone indicate the size of the challenge ahead.

12. The figure on perceived financial needs indicates that a funding gap is likely to persist unless often-stated rhetoric is followed by strong political will to adopt more radical measures than usually applied to ensure the attainment of the educational goals. This concerns both the efforts of national governments that have always financed the vast proportion of education, and of the international agency community whose funding plays an often critical, catalytic and supportive role. From an international perspective, the need to rethink funding strategies is related to the discouraging trends in Official Development Assistance (ODA) during the 1990s which, for the most part, 95%, is provided by DAC member countries as either grants, in the case of bilateral assistance, or concessional and non-concessional flows, in the case of multinational assistance. As a percentage of the combined GNP of DAC countries, ODA has fallen by more than one-fifth in constant dollar
terms, from 0.33% in 1992 to its lowest level of 0.22% in 1997 with some slight recovery to 0.24% in 1998. Real net ODA (in constant 1997 prices) fell from $60,524 million in 1992 to $48,324 million in 1997, then increased to $50,835 in 1998 (see Figures 1 and 2). Provisional DAC ODA figures for 1999 show a further overall increase with, however, individual country fluctuations (Statistics from Press Statement by DAC Chairman, May 2000). Of the member countries, the largest four economies, France, Germany, Japan and United States, together with Canada and Italy, have had the greatest reductions in their assistance during the 1990s, although the trend for Japan, in particular, may become more encouraging if the provisional 1999 figures are confirmed. By contrast, the non-G7 group have allocated increased shares throughout the 1990s and new, smaller countries have joined in this support.

13. With respect to geographical allocation of ODA, trends in both its volume and share for the least developed countries and for sub-Saharan Africa have been downward in recent years, with some of the major aid providers being responsible for some of the largest reductions. The proportional allocation to the least developed countries dropped from 37 to 32% of the total during1987/88 to 1997/98 while that of sub-Saharan Africa dropped from 32.1 to 29.5% of the total during the same period (OECD/DAC, 1998, 1999, 2000a).

14. As a proportion of total net resource flows, ODA dropped from 41.4% to an estimated 20.7% during 1991-98. Both bilateral and multilateral ODA have been halved during the same period, bilateral assistance dropping from 30% to an estimated 14.7% and multilateral assistance from 11.4% to an estimated 6.1% of the total. Of the multilateral assistance, non-concessional net disbursements (constant 1997 prices) have gained in importance, increasing from $2,834 million in 1994 to $16,343 million in 1997 whereas concessional disbursements dropped from $17,503 million in 1994 to $14,722 million in 1998. The largest contributors of concessional flows were EC ($5,176 million) and IDA ($4,693 million), constituting roughly two-thirds of total flows in 1998. Of the non-concessional flows, the highest proportion came from IBRD ($5,804 million) followed by those from the Asian Development Bank ($4,701 million) and IDB ($4,153 million) (OECD/DAC, 2000a).

15. It is noteworthy that education seems to have suffered relatively less within this overall declining ODA trend. Although persistent problems of recording and analysing aid, including that for education, prevent a reliable analysis, all sources consulted for this study indicate that education has largely maintained its proportionate level during the 1990s. Thus, total DAC bilateral allocation for education constituted 10.6% of the total in 1998 compared with 8.7% in 1991 and 11.5% in 1989. In 1998, multilateral allocations constituted 7.6% of the total compared to 8.8% in 1991 and 4.6% in 1989 (Buchert, 1995; OECD/DAC, 2000a). According to DAC, the absolute value of bilateral commitments to education increased from $3,288 million in 1990 to $3,553 million (constant prices) in 1997, having experienced a high of $4,632 million in 1994. Multilateral funding increased from $1,748 million in 1990 to $2,789 million in (constant prices) 1997 (UNESCO, 2000b, p. 120). Total bilateral ODA commitments and commitments to education from the twelve highest ODA providers appear in Figures 3a and 3b.

16. Based on DAC-data provided for Bentall et al. (2000, p. 25), the relative commitment from bilateral agencies to basic education as a proportion of total commitments for the education sector rose steadily from 2% in 1993 to 14% in 1997. According to OECD/DAC (2000a), basic

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2 Total net flows are constituted by Official Development Finance (which includes Official Development Assistance, Official Aid and other Official Development Finance), Export Credits and Private Flows.

3 These figures are lower than those in the study prepared for the World Education Forum (Bentall et al., 2000) which presents both DAC-provided data and survey data collected specifically for the study. According to the report (p. 20), ODA commitments to education based on the survey data constituted 16% in 1990, declined to 7% in 1992, and recovered to average around 15% during 1993-98. According to DAC data in the report, bilateral ODA commitments constituted around 14% at the beginning of the decade and rose to nearly 16% in 1997.

4 Note that these figures are lower than those provided by DAC to Bentall et al. (2000) which (converted into constant 1997 prices) represent a drop from $5,114 million in 1990 to $4,793 million in 1997 as bilateral commitments.
Figure 1. Real net flows of Official Development Assistance, 1966-1998
(in constant 1997 prices)

Figure 2. Real and current net flows of Official Development Assistance, 1966-1998
Figure 3a. Total bilateral ODA commitments and ODA commitments to education, from selected DAC countries, 1985-1998

Figure 3b. Total bilateral ODA commitments and ODA commitments to education, from selected DAC countries, 1985-1998
education constituted 1% of total bilateral ODA and 1.8% of total multilateral ODA in 1998. Even though the 1% figure was recently adjusted by DAC based on updated information from its member countries, the total amount in support of basic education is still remarkably low, being now estimated at $700 million instead of the original $400 million for 1998 (OECD/DAC, 2000b). The figure indicates the huge distance to the perceived funding gap of an additional $7-8 billion per year for universal primary education alone.

17. By contrast, the total net resource flows to aid recipients more than doubled from 1991 to 1996 (from $138 billion to $369 billion), but has been severely declining since then (estimated at $239 billion for 1998) (OECD/DAC, 2000a). Of the total amount, the proportional shares of Official Development Finance (which includes ODA) and private flows have reversed during 1991-1998, Official Development Finance constituting 61% of the total in 1991 and 37% in 1998, compared to 38% and 61% of the total, respectively, for private flows in the same years. Of the private flows, bond lending and international portfolio flows hold the dominant position as bank lending has not yet recovered from the negative impact of the Asian financial crisis.

18. This picture of total flows underlines several of the challenges that have to be addressed if the international community is to play a truly supportive role in meeting the goals and targets of EFA. First, the recent reverse in importance of private flows over ODA seems to match the increased importance of establishing supportive macro-economic environments as a precondition to poverty reduction, social and educational development. In this thinking, private sector flows are considered to be catalytic to national economic development. However, if a mutually reinforcing relationship between macro-economic stability and structural reform on one hand, and growth and reduction of poverty and inequality, on the other, is to be established, then the comparative importance of ODA must be heightened and the underlying conditions for private flows revisited. Second, while the relative proportion of multilateral compared to bilateral assistance has remained the same within overall ODA during the 1990s, multilateral non-concessional resources now constitute the larger proportion of total multilateral assistance. This highlights a potentially continuing or increased financial burden on aid receiving countries. Third, support for education and for basic education is feeble. This leaves national governments and the international community with the need to design strategies that are not only all-encompassing and creative in terms of approach and content, but also with the responsibility to ensure that all funding raised is used to its maximum benefit in the pursuit of the stipulated EFA goals and targets.

19. What follows are proposals for strategies that respond to each of the stipulated elements in the Dakar Framework: to increase and ensure more reliable external financial assistance, to use debt relief and/or debt reduction to promote Education for All, to facilitate donor coordination and strengthen sector-wide approaches, and to monitor EFA goals effectively. An important extension of these elements is the use of external funding to its maximum. Strategies for targeting of aid, both geographically and thematically, are, therefore, also included.

II. STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT OF EDUCATION FOR ALL

20. Discussions on increasing international assistance has focused particularly on the use of private investment, improved trade relations and debt relief as potential, supplementary measures to international aid. Less influential has been the reallocation of resources from military spending, the size of which would permit immediate attention to the funding needs of Education for All (see, for example, OECD/DAC, 1996, 1998, 2000a; Watkins, n.d.; Khler and Wolfensohn, 5 September 2000). The establishment of coherence through coordination, sector-wide approaches and monitoring can be understood as important measures for efficiency improvements in international aid.

21. International and national resource mobilization must be complementary and well targeted in the pursuit of holistic national development processes. Several preconditions must, therefore, be met in order for policies and strategies to be successful. One is to ensure that support for EFA is not isolated from support for the full education sector or from other core elements of a government’s budget. Education for All must be linked within sector frameworks with poverty reduction and development strategies, as
stated in the Dakar Framework for Action. This means coherence, on one hand, among national Education for All action plans, education sector plans, development strategies and other policy frameworks, such as the Common Country Assessments (CCA), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the World Bank Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

22. Another precondition is that international support be provided as a function of the different institutional and structural contexts and constraints at the national level which determine the appropriate approaches, strategies and resource utilization. In this respect, macro-economic and sectoral reform must be linked in order to ensure a supportive environment enabling the education system to function efficiently and effectively as a development tool. Reform efforts must include policy reform to enhance locally generated resources for education and other development purposes through, for example, more effective fiscal instruments, appropriate taxation and taxation incentives, enhanced private sector contributions and budgetary re-allocations, and the attraction of additional private international capital flows, concessional resources and improved measures for debt relief. All resources and expenditures must be treated within a common budgetary framework. Simultaneous policy reform of the education sector must aim at cost-shifting and cost-sharing, without adverse effects for the poor and without enhancing gender, rural/urban, regional and other inequalities. Efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching-learning processes must be heightened through locally adapted solutions, including the use of new information technologies as an important delivery mode. This also includes the adoption of sector-wide approaches to educational development and improving aid conditionalities.

23. The detailed strategy work, which must be done at the country level in view of the specific country circumstances, should take into consideration the elements of the Dakar Framework that aim at enhancing the contribution and impact of international development cooperation.

(i) Increasing external finance for (basic) education

24. In view of the mismatch between rhetoric and reality in ODA, it seems to be pertinent to remind DAC member countries, and particularly those with large economies, of the urgency of fulfilling their expressed commitments to sustainable development, poverty reduction and Education for All. In this respect, DAC member countries have to:

- Allocate a proportionately higher share of ODA to social development in accordance with the principles of the 20:20 Initiative and based on specific country circumstances.
- Double their support for education from the current level of $3.5 billion to constitute $7 billion by 2005, $10.5 billion by 2010 and $14 billion by 2015.
- Within increased overall support for education, significantly increase ODA for basic education from the current $700 million.
- Fulfil their commitments towards the HIPC Initiative and ensure that debt relief is channelled into support for Education for All (see below).
- Ensure coherence and coordination of all assistance internationally and nationally, and monitor progress towards the fulfilment of the goals of Education for All (see below).
- Target their assistance to achieve optimal effect, including support for innovative approaches to Education for All, building on best practices (see below).

Expanding the sources of financing

25. Due to the political climate and policy-making processes in the individual DAC member countries, even in the best scenario the perspectives for increasing ODA would be medium to long term rather than short term in nature. It is important, therefore, also to seek to expand the sources of financing to include, for instance, certain former aid recipient countries and non-DAC OECD member countries, as has happened in the case of the Republic of Korea.

26. Furthermore, the current strongest de facto source of financial flows, private investment financing, must be exploited to its utmost as long
as it leads to positive development for developing countries. In this respect, it might be worthwhile to forge new partnerships among the financial services industry, the state and civil society to promote social development and to link private and public finance with public education, as has been proposed by some observers (Berg, 2000; Findakly and Berg, 1997). As argued by them, the overall purpose would be to build solid financial systems, *inter alia* through benefiting from the potential of private financial markets, which are growing in many parts of the world where basic challenges for education remain, and to use different funding mechanisms to relieve pressure on the public systems, for example issuing of government bonds to finance education. Multilateral capital could be used for intermediation purposes, i.e. to facilitate the flows of savings from economies that have managed to accumulate capital to the ones that are in urgent need for it. The multinational banks could also assist in fostering the growth of debt markets in developing countries by, for example, issuing debts in such markets and deploying liquidity in order to attract private capital, and by devising specific financial instruments to leverage the private market while providing risk reduction and security.

27. Contributions from the private sector may also be increased through intensified use of and collaboration with national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private foundations and large-scale corporate foundations. At the national level, NGOs, community-based organizations and other private, charitable organizations are a potentially strong mechanism for collaboration among government, the business community and private citizens that could lead to focusing private charity towards organized investment in human and social capital. In a recent study on indigenous philanthropy in Pakistan, an aggregate amount of Rs 70 billion has been estimated for charity donations for 1998, money which might better serve development purposes if a focused institutional rather than individual approach guided its use (Bonbright and Azfar, 1999).

28. With respect to international NGOs, their contributions to ODA reported through OECD/DAC is low, constituting only 3% to 4% of the total since 1994 (OECD/DAC, 2000a), but most organizations operate outside of this framework. Some, for example Oxfam and ActionAid, have a key function in raising public awareness on a range of development issues. This is a function which needs to be expanded and rethought and to become a major obligation of all development partners involved in Education for All. Relevant ministries bear a particular responsibility for this. However, in contrast to the necessary lobbying and awareness-raising work of and by ministries, NGOs, as grass-roots organizations, are particularly suited to also undertake innovative fund-raising through market-oriented events, such as concerts or lotteries. Other initiatives could be considered in the context of the UNESCO follow-up to Dakar which incorporates the NGO alliance. Of particular relevance and interest would be to develop information programmes on Education for All along the lines of those on various development issues appearing regularly on the major international television channels produced by the World Bank, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Such programmes might assist in providing the necessary public awareness-raising to increase political support for international assistance to education in countries such as the United States which, despite being the second major ODA provider in 1998 (after Japan), contributed the lowest proportion of the total for education (1.7%).

29. With respect to *private foundations*, some have traditionally supported education programmes in different sub-sectors of education, such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the Aga Khan Foundation and the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The latter is, for example, particularly important for one of the least considered EFA goals, namely early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Other foundations, established more recently, also have an interest in wider development and specific education issues, such as the United Nations Foundation (Ted Turner), the Melissa and Bill Gates Foundation and the Gates Library Foundation. Special arrangements might also be made with, for example, the Soros Foundation that runs its own selected programmes in the area of education. Finally, a number of big *corporate foundations*, such as Kellogg, which have been supportive of education projects in a range of developing countries could be engaged in specific support for Education for All. Others, in particular
IT companies, such as Hewitt-Packard, are already involved in supporting primary education programmes and could, in addition to the Melissa and Bill Gates Foundation, be approached in order to solicit support, on favourable terms to the countries concerned, for the strategy to harness new information and communication technologies in the pursuit of EFA goals.

(ii) Ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance

30. From the perspective of aid-receiving countries, external financing serves national development best if it forms part of a holistic, long-term planning process. Predictability in financing is, therefore, equally important as enhancing the flows. Predictability rests, on one hand, on the capacity of aid providers to transfer resources according to specified time schedules and, on the other, on the capacity of aid-receiving countries to absorb and use the funding in accordance with nationally defined plans and goals. This is related to the need to ensure coherence between national and international strategies and plans, and to the rationale for debt relief schemes and the adoption of sector-wide approaches which will be discussed below.

31. Both enhancing and ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance depend upon political will and procedures that must relate to recipient country needs rather than aid-providing country interests. Such kinds of procedures are difficult to enact due to the diversity of prevailing interests within and across aid-providing countries and to the underlying different national purposes for provision of external assistance. Constrictions on countries because of tying of aid, of funding agency preference for investment in capital rather than recurrent costs or in sectors and areas of their own choice, have all long been identified as impeding national ownership and holistic development efforts. Similarly, specific underlying conditionalities for assistance, such as freezing of staff recruitment and wages, certain specified budget cuts, lack of indexing to inflation and delays in disbursement have limited decision-making, implementation capacity and flexibility of governments that should be more in charge of their own development process.

32. Development partners must, therefore, individually and collectively revisit their underlying terms of aid provision not only to ensure higher consistency between declared political commitment and actual action, but also in consideration of the fact that support for education should be provided on special, soft terms in view of its critical role for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Development partners must work with national governments in the establishment of procurement and reporting procedures that have their point of departure in country needs and interests, an issue which is also pertinent in the context of sector-wide approaches (see below). The major funding agencies, IMF and the World Bank, represent a special case in point. Much criticism has been raised of IMF macro-economic conditionalities related to structural adjustment and macro-economic reform. The critical issue remains to provide funding on the best possible terms for the countries and to establish social development goals as core objectives alongside macro-economic targets.

33. Countries would obviously be better served if they did not have to resort to borrowing for education, and if such lending from just one source, the World Bank, did not constitute a predominant proportion of external funding for education. But even in the current situation, ameliorative steps could be taken. In contrast to DAC countries overall, the World Bank has considerably increased its commitments for education in its overall funding and, within education, for basic education understood more specifically as primary education. The Bank intends to continue to do so, partly through increased investment financing and partly through alternative sources, such as social/community action programmes, public expenditure reform credits, poverty reduction support programmes and HIPC debt relief. Overall lending for education increased from 7.9% of total lending in 1996 to 10.9% of the total in 1998 when it amounted to $3,160 million (constant 1997 prices) (World Bank, 1998, p. 8). Within education, support for basic (primary) education has been above 30% of the total since 1990 and constituted 40% of the total in 1996 (Mundy, 1999, p. 107).

34. It is notable, however, that most World Bank commitments for education have been provided as non-concessional funding through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the proportion having increased from 53% of total lending for education in 1996 to 62% of the total in 1998 (World Bank,
It has been provided mostly to middle-income countries in Latin America. By contrast, the soft-loan commitments through the International Development Association (IDA) have been fluctuating during the 1990s. They were at a lower level at the end than at the beginning of the 1990s. The commitments to sub-Saharan Africa dropped during the 1990s in contrast to increases for both South-East Asia and Latin America (Watkins, n.d.). Thus, a restructuring of internal lending leading to a greater proportionate focus on concessional IDA funding and on countries with highest need might both ease the financial burden on the recipient countries and be more supportive of the goals and targets for Education for All.

(iii) Providing debt relief and/or cancellation for poverty reduction and basic education

35. Debt relief and/or debt reduction have been identified as the potentially most important catalyst, particularly in the HIPC countries, for poverty reduction and social, including educational development, and for bringing the internationally agreed development targets by 2005 and 2015 within reach. It is also an important part of the discussion to establish coherence both across different policy areas, such as development policy, foreign policy, and international trade and investment policies within and among countries in the North and the South, and between nations and external agencies (Forster and Stokke, 1999). The intention of the debt relief schemes is to free up national resources that through pre-agreement between the creditor and the debtor government, are converted into support, for example, for the attainment of Education for All. Debt-for-development-swaps have been proposed as another possible financial mechanism which could be adopted, for example by bilateral and multilateral organizations that are the main creditors in Africa (Saravanamutto and Shaw, 1995). The swaps would also imply that an amount of debt would be forgiven if a government pledges to allocate the equivalent amount in local or foreign currency for agreed activities, such as support for Education for All. This is similar to the principles of the 20:20 Initiative.

36. These mechanisms must be enacted into their full potential for countries in need. It is also important to consider the possible inclusion of larger countries currently excluded from the scheme, for example E9 countries. In order that debt relief can be used as a social development mechanism, a stronger accord must urgently be reached between rhetoric and practice, as in the case of ODA. This is highlighted by the fact that, since debt schemes were first put into place in the 1980s and until 1996, the debt stock in the HIPC countries has increased by a factor of four, rather than having decreased, that 40% of bilateral aid to HIPC countries has been used to repay debt to multilateral creditors (IMF and the World Bank), and that debt forgiveness has constituted only 2% of the total net flow of financial resources from DAC countries to developing countries during the 1990s. Six of HIPC sub-Saharan countries spend more than one-third of the national budget on debt servicing, while spending 4 to 11% on basic social services (Oxfam, 1999a, pp. 7, 11-12; OECD/DAC, 2000a). Serious concerns have also been expressed concerning the prospects for success of the HIPC Initiative – which was revised by the World Bank and IMF following the recommendations of the G7 meeting in Cologne in 1999 – unless bilateral and multilateral organizations and the G7 countries translate their commitment into immediate generation of new resources that are additional to ODA. Otherwise, there is a strong risk that the reform may not take place or may be financed through a diversion of development assistance, likely from non-HIPC countries (Oxfam 1999a, 1999b).

37. Another concern is that the underlying terms for the scheme must favour countries rather than creditors. Among the perceived benefits of the revised HIPC scheme are an increase in the number of eligible countries from 26 to 33 because of a reduction in the debt-to-export ratio from 200-250% to 150%, and the release of earlier flow of resources because debt relief will be fixed at the Decision Point rather than at the Completion Point. However, in order to serve poverty reduction and human development purposes, it has been argued, eligibility criteria must be tied to national revenue instead of export

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5 The HIPC Initiative involves two stages. According to the original terms, the country would work during a period of up to three years with IMF/the World Bank to establish a record of good economic policies and poverty reduction related to improving social programmes, particularly in education and health. At the end of the period, i.e. at the Decision Point, some debt relief would be provided and a full package of debt relief would be identified if needed by the country. This full package would be provided at the Completion Point, after up to another three years, based on an evaluation of good policy performance.
flows since the private sector rather than governments in HIPC countries now account for 80-100% of export earnings, preventing the governments from using the resources from debt servicing which instead has to be met from the budget revenue (Oxfam 1999b; Martin, 1999 quoted in Oxfam, 1999a). Furthermore, since eligibility criteria are currently conditioned only on compliance with the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF), which prioritizes short-term macro-economic targets rather than medium-term human development goals, ESAF needs to be integrated with wider development and poverty reduction strategies in order for debt relief to serve social development purposes.

38. Finally, although lending agencies have recently eased some of the conditions for access to the scheme – for example, proof of good performance in an official lending programme over several years – the precondition for countries to join the scheme is the production of a complex poverty strategy with plans for social development in interrelated areas and detailing the roles of the government, the private sector and civil society. Even though lenders now accept far less rigorous plans as a first step in a debt relief process, the production of a national poverty strategy, in many cases, depends on knowledge which countries do not have. The World Bank which, as mentioned, is planning to use the HIPC scheme as one mechanism to increase funding for education, has proposed to provide support for the development of poverty plans as a separate low-interest loan scheme. The international community should instead provide the necessary technical assistance to countries that may wish to be considered for the scheme without this causing additional financial burden on the countries. This is important not only for the immediate financial reasons, but also because the national poverty strategy papers must form an integral part of the ongoing effort to achieve coherence between national and international policy-making and action.

(iv) Facilitating more effective donor coordination

39. Effective donor coordination is both a policy question and a practical issue. Its purpose is to ensure consistency in goals and strategies adopted by all actors as a basis to promote holistic national development processes and ensure maximum impact of international assistance. It is, therefore, considered to be a particularly important mechanism for efficiency gains. Coherence must be established both within and across sectors and subsectors, and between nationally and internationally developed strategies and plans. The nature and forms of coordination in the education sector have, however, varied in different contexts and over time. It has included all or part of: consultation and exchange of information, common understanding of policy and programme objectives and priorities, policy and sector analysis at the country level, cooperation in project and programme design and execution; and cooperation in policy formulation (Sack, 1995). All of these aspects are now expected to form an integral whole in the kind of coordination effort represented by sector-wide approaches, as discussed below. Coordination is expected to take place both among all funding and technical assistance agencies, and between national governments and agencies and civil society organisations active in the sector or sub-sector in a specific country. At the country-level, national governments are expected to lead the coordination effort (King and Buchert, 1999).

40. In the forthcoming coordination efforts, the international community needs to build on already achieved experiences at the national level through, for example, Round-Tables. There is a need, however, for better coordination across United Nations agencies which might be achieved if UNESCO, as the specialized United Nations agency for education, became a member of the United Nations Development Group in an attempt to ensure that, amongst others, Education for All became an integral part of all relevant United Nations activities.

41. In fulfilment of its coordinating role in the follow-up to Dakar, UNESCO has already put a number of mechanisms in place aiming at ensuring openness, transparency, interaction and sharing of experiences within countries, across regions and globally. UNESCO is working through its national and regional offices and at headquarters through carefully set up bodies aiming at coordinating the work both internally within the organization and externally with its partners. Two bodies have been or are in the process of being set up within UNESCO with representatives of key external actors: a high-level policy group chaired by the Director-General

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6 ESAF was renamed the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) in September 2000.
Rationale and Strategies

himself and a Working Group on Education for All convened by the Director-General. The two groups provide forums for sharing the concrete national, regional and international experiences in Education for All, for discussing some of the core issues related to reaching its goals and for ensuring that the already expressed high-level political commitment is translated into practice. UNESCO is also hoping that its Guidelines for the Development of National Action Plans for Education for All will become a valuable tool for countries to develop or improve those action plans which are fundamental to ensuring coordination of national and international efforts in EFA.

(v) Strengthening sector-wide approaches

42. Education sector coordination is currently advocated by many international agencies and national governments through sector-wide approaches. While current practices indicate many difficulties and uncertainties in the design and implementation of such approaches, they are generally considered to be a potentially important tool in the pursuit of coherence and effective use of international assistance in support of national development efforts and as the best alternative, or supplementary, mode to the kind of fragmented international project support that characterized international development cooperation in earlier decades. The approaches must be understood as a process, not as a blueprint. Their design must be based on careful analysis of country conditions, and lessons learnt and best practices need to inform both design and implementation processes.

43. Sector-wide approaches can be looked upon in three different ways: as a new way of working together based on partnerships and policy dialogue; as a new framework for development assistance enabling consistency in purposes and means among all partners; and as a new instrument for development assistance promoting reforms through agreed operational commitments and devolving greater authority to national governments concerning resource decisions (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999). The approaches provide an opportunity for national authorities and development partners to be aligned with shared priorities and permit the agencies to provide longer term support against well-defined social policy objectives. The approaches intend to reduce the transaction costs of aid while at the same time building a sense of ownership by providing broad budget support for a clear national strategy, as the pooled funds from the development partners are channelled through national and sectoral budgets for a common programme of work at each level. In those cases where agencies are not ready to provide support for the national budget, they are expected to work within the framework of national priorities and targets in order to contribute to overall sector development. The approaches also rely on development partners working according to a common set of procedures for procurement, reporting, joint appraisals and evaluations, preferably as defined by the national government (Forster et al., 2000; Buchert and Epksamp, 2000).

44. Understood as a new instrument, sector-wide approaches often translate into an agreed framework for medium-term financing and budgeting with international support provided for the national budget. This is done in an effort to achieve better correlation between budget and performance targets for individual sectors and to provide longer-term assurances of international support, including for the recurrent budget. Within medium-term expenditure frameworks, annual budgets for specific sectors can be rolled forward and spending patterns monitored in relation to allocations within the macro-economic reform programme (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999). Currently, sector-wide approaches tend to serve more as a framework for new ways of working between governments and agencies, including in financing education, than of ensuring widespread participation in design and implementation.

45. Among the pre-conditions to success are, on the country side, the existence of a supportive national policy and institutional environment characterized by longer term macro-economic planning, government leadership and participation of civil society. On the agency side, important pre-conditions are their ability to pool funding, work within common frameworks and adopt common procedures across the participating agencies. On both sides, institutional re-arrangements and development of new process and other skills in addition to skills in technical areas are equally important.

46. In many or most aid-receiving countries, policy and institutional environments need to be strengthened in order to support these new kinds of integrated and holistic approaches. Capacity and institution building must, therefore, continue to form a central part of introducing the
approaches and must remain a core area for international technical assistance in accordance with carefully identified government needs and targeted at all relevant actors at the national level. Understanding and information of the implications of sector-wide approaches must be shared by all partners at the country level before their design and during their implementation. All relevant experiences, lessons and best practices must, therefore, be carefully and regularly analysed and shared through research, seminars, and other information and communication activities, particularly at the country levels.

47. Of particular importance in the adoption of sector-wide approaches is an evaluation of the necessary pre-conditions in the country. Such conditions have tended to be related to the macro-economic and political environment whereas the readiness of the education sector to absorb increased funding and activities has been less in focus. The readiness criteria must, therefore, be expanded and the pace of home-grown versus induced change in the innovation and reform at the country level must be carefully considered. This also means considering alternatives, including well-functioning projects and programmes, for countries that qualify for international assistance, but are not yet ready to apply the sector-wide approaches as a specific aid modality.

(vi) Monitoring of progress towards the goals and targets of Education for All

48. Monitoring of progress towards Education for All goals must be made the responsibility of all partners nationally, regionally and internationally. Global progress will be monitored by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in cooperation with the development partners. Monitoring must be an integral part of national, regional and international plans and a regular activity in the Education for All efforts in order to permit necessary adjustments during the process. Monitoring must be based on common output and outcomes indicators that cover all aspects of the multi-faceted Education for All concept, while allowing for adaptation to the particular circumstances in individual countries.

49. There is a particular need for the international community and national governments to agree on indicators to measure progress towards the goals and targets of Education for All. It is also critically important to ensure that appropriate education management and information systems exist at the country level, that countries can undertake base-line surveys in order to enhance the quality, accuracy and validity of the data used at country level to monitor progress, and that countries have the necessary national capacities for evaluation and monitoring.

Targeting of international assistance to Education for All

50. The climate of scarce aid resources has reinforced attention to overall aid effectiveness and to issues of accountability for and transparency of its use. It has also toughened conditions for its provision. Reinforced support for government leadership, coherence and coordination of efforts among all development actors have, furthermore, led to a concentration on a more limited group of countries and areas selected for support by development partners, necessarily crowding out support for other countries, sectors, areas or target groups. This has happened as the collapse of communism and expanded globalization have further marginalized regions, countries and population groups, and established new, or reinforced existing, poverty pockets within countries in the North and the South. Civil war, natural disasters and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have also reinforced the need for additional and innovative international assistance. Recent economic developments, such as the East Asian financial crisis and the effects of the oil shock, highlight the likelihood of further dependence on international assistance, while information technology represents another mechanism to potentially either develop or divide regions, countries and population groups even further.

51. The existence of “good” national policies, based on macro-economic reform and political characteristics associated with democracy, has become an important criterion on efficiency grounds for aid allocations. Not only the World Bank, but countries such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have indicated that they plan to pursue this approach (OECD/DAC, 2000a). The core thinking, which has been based on extensive research on the impact of aid, is that economies lag more because of policy gaps and institutional failures in recipient countries than because of financing (Dollar and Pritchett, 1998). Therefore, it is argued, aid must be provided to support the policy and institutional environment.
so that services, such as education, can be effectively delivered.

52. Aid is understood to have two important ingredients: finance and knowledge. The particular mix of an aid package would differ in different contexts, depending particularly on the quality of the national policy environment and the capacity for service delivery. Under certain circumstances, aid may be more efficient if delivered as knowledge rather than financing. This understanding led to the following proposed, general principles for aid provision (Dollar and Pritchett, 1998):

- That more aid be provided for poor countries with good management because aid could make a critical difference in the development process.
- That aid be reduced or withdrawn in middle-income countries with good management because these countries were reaching self-sufficiency and because this would free up scarce aid resources.
- That aid be provided for middle-income countries with poor management in order to improve service delivery.
- That other forms than financial aid, in particular ideas, be provided for poor countries with poor management because financial aid would make little or no difference.

Supporting Education for All

53. The current aid scenario and the classification based on aid efficiency raise several concerns for the move towards Education for All. As a rights-based education concept, Education for All addresses itself particularly to the poor and excluded. The importance of linking Education for All with education sector plans and wider poverty and development strategies implies the importance of supporting full education sector development seen in relation to education’s core functions in national development processes. Therefore, while considerations must be made about the best use of scarce external financing in the support of Education for All, and while national governments must show commitment to the goals of Education for All, no country can per se be excluded beforehand as non-eligible for educational assistance since all countries would qualify either based on the right to education, or based on the need for full integration of the education sector in national development.

54. This is not to say that macro-economic and political stability is not, potentially, more conducive to educational development than the opposite scenario, or that some countries cannot better than others promote educational development provided they have the necessary political will. However, these criteria are not the only relevant ones. Education has a particularly important role to play as a unifying national mechanism in post-conflict countries that are more often characterized by macro-economic instability than stability. Education is also of key importance in countries characterized by political crisis situations, often associated with the collapse of the state, or in other emergency situations causing economic and political disruption. Finally, even in attractive macro-economic circumstances, educational development in support of Education for All, reduced inequalities and poverty reduction needs to be based on clear political will and supportive policies. Education can be a lever for economic growth, and economic growth a lever for educational development, but educational development and economic growth only result in decreased poverty if appropriate national and sub-national policies, including distribution policies, are designed in ways determined by the complexity of social factors in a specific context at a specific time (Srinivasan, 2000). This explains why apparently similar policies and processes have generated different results in different contexts over time and why much work is still needed to understand the actual mechanisms that determine the relationship between education and societal development.

55. Targeting of international support for Education for All could take its point of departure in country needs and country commitment for the Education for All process as they are expressed in effective national EFA action plans and education sector plans and as they are linked with national development strategies and with CCA/UNDAF and PRSP/CDF. However, most of the internationally-initiated policy frameworks for specific countries are in the process of being developed rather than having been completed. In July 2000, of 59 least developed countries in Africa, very few had the full set of policy frameworks, while a larger number of countries had access to a part of them. In some cases, countries with access to some or all of the policy frameworks have undergone a dynamic and mobilizing process of target-setting and creation of plans of action for Education for All, for
example Gambia, Guinea, Madagascar, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. In others, for example Mali, little or no dynamics have taken place and substantial improvement of the formulation of national action plans is required. Twenty to thirty countries, for example Mozambique, also have education sector strategic plans or have adopted sector-wide approaches to educational development.

56. Thus, while the full set of policy frameworks and plans might provide an ideal basis for an analysis of the specific countries and areas where support for Education for All might make the most difference, other criteria may have to be adopted for other countries on a short-term basis. Such criteria may have to be based on scarcer information than would be ideal concerning government commitment to education as expressed in budget allocations, concerning intentions for fulfilment of the Education for All targets, the general educational situation in the country, the level of poverty and the likely flow of international resources to the specific country.

57. Besides geographical selection, targeting of external financing relates to content and special areas and to the relationship between the basic education and other levels of education. In most countries, Education for All connotes basic education. The concept is generally understood to range from formal primary-school and perhaps (junior) secondary-school education, through non-formal skills development and literacy, to early childhood development. Women and girls are often specifically targeted. Support for Education for All is, therefore, comprehensive and needs to be seen in the context of support for intermediary and higher-level technical and professional education in order to achieve holistic, educational development.

58. In reality, not all countries and not all international funding and technical assistance agencies focus on all areas of Education for All or on all sub-sectors of education. In 1996, the major proportion of total ODA (74%) was concentrated on formal education, while areas covered by the Education for All concept (adult, pre-primary and primary education) constituted about half of total support (48%), primary-school education alone constituting 22%. Similarly, World Bank lending to the Africa region during Financial Years 1995/99 was allocated to the formal system, pre-primary education constituting only 2% of the total and primary education 46%. This indicates relative preferences among the international agencies, often based on what they consider to be their comparative advantage and on disbursement needs rather than necessarily on country preferences or priorities.

59. The current climate of policy dialogue, partnership and sector-wide approaches is aiming at reversing this situation and at altering the persistent division of funding responsibilities at the country level among the government (teacher salaries), communities and parents (recurrent expenditure), and international funding and technical assistance agencies (capital and development expenditure). This issue deserves more attention. There is a need to explore full packages of support for individual countries that at the same time aim at ensuring holistic national development and optimal use of external and national funding for self-sustained development purposes without adverse effects on the poor. This includes considerations to alleviate continued dependence on external financing and external conditionalities and maximum use of innovative schemes, such as Information Technologies, in order that these enhance rather than constrain national development. UNESCO proposes to develop these ideas further through discussing concrete scenarios as the next step in this strategy work for the global initiative.

7 The distribution was as follows: adult education 19%; pre-primary-school education 7%; primary-school education 22%; secondary-school education 20%; post-secondary-school education 12%; and higher education 20% (ADEA PRISME, 1998).

8 The distribution was as follows: pre-primary-school education 2%; primary-school education 46%; general secondary-school education 17%, vocational education 4%; teacher training 5%; higher education 7%; and other 19%.
III. CONCLUSION

60. Success in achieving the goals of Education for All depends on national and international resource mobilization, efficiency improvements and optimal targeting and utilization of the funding seen in the context of solidly developed Education for All action plans and wider education sector plans. Although responsibility predominantly rests with national governments, the international community has a critical, catalytic and supportive role to play in fulfilment of its responsibility to reduce global inequalities and poverty. The goals of Education for All underline the right to education and the need to establish inclusive criteria for international support. Current emphases on coherence and coordination as expressed in the need to link national Education for All action plans with education sector plans, national poverty and development strategies, and with other policy frameworks and papers underline that support for Education for All must go beyond immediate support for Education for All goals to full support for education in national development processes.

61. International financial resources are in short supply and high demand. Scarce resources have contributed to focusing attention on aid effectiveness and to narrowing the range of countries and specific sectors and areas selected for financial support by the international community. At the same time, conditionalities have toughened and recent global economic, political and social development point to likely increased dependence on international assistance. There is an urgent need, therefore, for the international community to think widely and creatively in terms of resource mobilization and to act with more urgency than in the past. Traditional forms of international assistance must be supplemented with new ones, and efficiency improvements must be achieved through adoption of new procedures for international cooperation.

62. With respect to international financing, it is essential to augment current official development assistance provided by the DAC member countries and to ensure higher predictability in its flow to countries. Predictability must be based not only on adherence to detailed and longer-term scheduling of ODA by development partners, but also on careful analysis of absorption and utilization capacity in the recipient countries. UNESCO proposes that ODA funding for education be doubled twice from its current level of $3.5 billion, to constitute $7 billion by the year 2005 and $14 billion by the year 2015. Within this increased aid scenario for education, funding for basic education needs to be drastically increased from its current low level of $700 million. In addition to increased ODA from current DAC member countries, additional resources must be mobilized through identification of new aid-providing countries, heavier reliance on the private sector, including the financial services industry, softening of aid conditionalities, and introducing new modalities. Of potentially critical importance for the poorer countries is the HIPC debt relief scheme which must be enacted at an accelerated pace, at improved conditions to the countries and with assurance that debt relief is converted into support for social development and, in particular, for Education for All. Countries with “good” policies and safe investment environments are likely to continue to benefit from private financial flows.

63. Coordination, coherence and monitoring of progress towards Education for All must be done at national, regional and international levels in cooperation with all development partners within and outside the United Nations system. UNESCO has already assumed its leadership role in the coordination of Education for All through its own extended system and through specially created bodies which include external key partners. All development partners must seek efficiency improvements through better coordination, through strengthening sector-wide approaches, amongst others, through careful analysis of pre-conditions, and sharing of lessons and best practices, and through regular monitoring of progress towards Education for All.

64. The present time seems to be advantageous for the international community to fulfil its commitment towards a more just and equal world. Economies are growing, governments have repeatedly expressed their political commitment, and the world possesses sufficient knowledge to act and to realize the consequences of not acting. The international community must join efforts and, together with national governments, ensure that rhetoric does become reality and that, by 2015, the achievement made towards the goals and targets for Education for All and global poverty reduction will truly make a difference to those who need it most, the children, the poor and the excluded.
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