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**Ministerial Round Table on Education and Economic Development**

**19 and 20 October 2007**

**Paris**

**COMMUNIQUÉ**

**I. We, the Ministers of Education** of 96 countries, meeting on 19 and 20 October 2007 in Paris, thank the Director-General of UNESCO for this timely opportunity to address the relationship between education and economic development. We thank Mr Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the representative of the Youth Forum, which met prior to this session of the General Conference, for their active participation in the Round Table. We also appreciate the active participation of civil society representatives in the discussions. The Round Table addressed the following themes:

- the rights to education and development;
- the contributions of education to economic growth;
- education and sustainable development;
- partnerships for education and economic development.

All the themes are critically important for all our countries, many of which have a large proportion of young people. We also underline that education and economic development are interdependent: increasing levels of education underpin economic development, which in its turn generates resources for education. We set our discussions in the context of realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and those of education for all and ensuring that education contributes to peace, broader social development, active citizenship and the promotion of human values. In an era of unprecedented change, we recognize that education systems must respond with innovative and different approaches.

**II. We reaffirm our commitment to:**

**1. Striving for an approach to education through which:**

- (a) everyone has the opportunity to realize a right that includes a quality education, which is also the basis for the realization of other rights, for social cohesion and for personal fulfilment;
- (b) quality education is inclusive, fosters equity and gender equality, and is a force for social stability, peace and resolution of conflict;

- (c) broad-based education serves to help counter extremism and terrorism by giving hope and life chances to young people vulnerable to perpetrators of violence, conflict and other forms of exploitation;
- (d) in this era of globalization, literacy and lifelong learning opportunities, which thrive on the free flow of ideas, empower people to address and manage change and take their place as citizens of the world;
- (e) the impact on education of mobility and migration – whether in search of opportunities or because of displacement – is the subject of special attention and international dialogue, and concerted efforts are made to counter the negative impact of brain drain;
- (f) access to education is addressed, and this right urgently realized, especially for the poorest and most marginalized, including more than 72 million children not in school and 774 million adults without literacy skills;
- (g) learners enjoy safe schools and the full value of education, in its social, cultural, spiritual and personal dimensions, as well as its key role as a means of economic advancement.

**2. Strengthening linkages between education and economic development, so that:**

- (a) increased, balanced and prioritized investment is made in the whole education system, so that all levels and types of education, from basic to higher, reinforce each other;
- (b) the quality of education improves, based on sound assessment of learning achievement, sharing knowledge of such assessment, strengthening the quality of teacher training, and emphasizing literacy as the foundation of other skills;
- (c) curricula respond to the new demands of the global market and knowledge economy, providing skills such as communication, critical thinking, self-confidence, science and technology education, environmental knowledge, and learning how to go on learning;
- (d) within the framework of diversified post-primary provision, technical and vocational education is promoted and redesigned in order to offer both practical skills and broader competencies, opening pathways to higher education and improving employability and entrepreneurship;
- (e) effective bridges are built between education and the world of work, aligning education with work possibilities in a given context;
- (f) access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) is consistently increased, and ICTs also facilitate distance education, teacher training and more flexible and innovative education models for lifelong learning.

**3. Sustaining development through education, so that:**

- (a) education transmits the knowledge, values and the skills needed to make development sustainable, in all parts of the world, especially among youth who will take charge of the future;
- (b) education takes due account of the three pillars of sustainable development – environmental protection, economic development and social development;
- (c) education for sustainable development is a theme in learning content and curriculum planning, across levels and types of education, based on scientific evidence;

- (d) models and paths of development respect cultural and biodiversity, future generations and the planet, encouraging the pursuit of food security for all, and promoting balanced patterns of consumption;
- (e) the voices of communities are heard, and cultural heritage is respected.

**4. Building partnerships for education and economic development, so that:**

- (a) stronger local, national and international cooperation and partnerships are formed – within and between governments, intergovernmental organizations, educational institutions around the world, international organizations, the private sector and business community, local governments, civil society organizations and families – in the context of policy dialogue, and with a focus on inclusion and capacity-development;
- (b) increased resources, both domestic and external, are made available to enable EFA commitments to be fulfilled, including through enhanced ODA and innovative financing mechanisms, and paying due attention to the principles of aid effectiveness and effective donor harmonization;
- (c) North-South cooperation and South-South cooperation (especially in the context of the E-9 initiative and in the framework of regional organizations), as well as triangular (North-South-South) cooperation, are further enhanced, particularly with a view to sharing good practices;
- (d) public-private partnerships are encouraged and developed, particularly for the benefit of youth, in support of general education, and vocational, higher education and research opportunities;
- (e) common aspects of agendas and goals are acknowledged in EFA, MDGs, PRSPs, aid effectiveness, United Nations reform and collaboration, other international frameworks and agreements, and working to maximize synergy between them for education and economic development.

**III. Thus we call on UNESCO:**

- (a) to strengthen its focus on multistakeholder cooperation in education and to ensure that links with sustainable economic development constitute an ongoing theme in its programmes and activities;
- (b) to initiate a reflection process on the respective roles of the State and other stakeholders in the organization and delivery of education in contexts where the private sector is increasingly engaging in expanding access to and enhancing the quality of education;
- (c) to give particular attention to the needs of the least developed countries (LDCs) in line with the outcomes of the recent ministerial side meeting on LDCs in the 34th session of the UNESCO General Conference, and to the needs of small island developing States (SIDS), taking into account the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation;
- (d) to reinforce its coordination role in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), in education for all (EFA), and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), so that education and economic development together offer an even greater hope of a better and sustainable future.