



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of the opening
of the Seventh E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting**

Bali, Indonesia, 11 March 2008

Mr Vice-President,
Madam Kalla,
Mr Governor of Bali,
Distinguished Ministers of Education of the E-9 countries,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you all to the Seventh E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting.

Let me begin by paying warm tribute to Mr Yusuf Kalla, the vice-President of Indonesia, whose presence here today provides clear testimony of the high importance his country places on education as a key development priority.

The inauguration of the Exhibition of the EFA programme in Indonesia, by Madam Yusuf Kalla, is also a highly appreciated sign of the country's strong commitment to achieve the EFA goals and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Indonesia for its generosity and hospitality in hosting this meeting. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Governor and people of Bali for the warm welcome we have received.

Let me further extend my deep gratitude to the Minister for Education of Indonesia, Mr Bambang Sudibyo, whose hard work and support have made this Conference possible.

I am very pleased to be here in Bali, and am reminded of the educational advances that have been made by each E-9 country since the first biennial Ministerial Review Meeting that was held in this same location in 1995.

In recent years, the host country has assured the coordination of the E-9 initiative between each biennial meeting and, in this regard, let me thank Mexico for fulfilling this role since we gathered in Monterrey in February, 2006. Now it is Indonesia's turn to take over this responsibility and I am confident that the country will do so with resolve and success.

You will recall that the Declaration of our last meeting in Monterrey called for stronger institutional mechanisms within and between the E-9 initiative and its EFA partners. The aim is to foster cooperation and efficiency to push forward the EFA agenda. As a result, the E-9 initiative has been more closely integrated with other EFA mechanisms since 2006, notably the High-Level Group meeting and the International Advisory Panel. This visibility has clearly put challenges and opportunities within E-9 countries on the global policy agenda and helped all partners make more strategic recommendations on EFA.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, the international community committed to the provision of a quality education for all children by 2015. The progress of E-9 countries toward this ambitious goal will determine in no small measure whether or not it is achieved globally. The E-9 countries are highly diverse but one fact is clear: a majority can be cited as education models to other developing nations.

As you know, two of the EFA goals are also included among the MDGs – that is, universal primary education and gender equality. This recognizes the fact that the Millennium Development Agenda of reducing and eventually eliminating extreme poverty cannot be achieved without universal basic education and gender equality, in particular in education.

With respect to these two goals, the E-9 group has made important progress since Dakar. Most E-9 countries have achieved or are on track to achieve universal

primary education by 2015. Pakistan and Nigeria, however, will need to significantly step up efforts if they are to reach the goal by the target date.

Four countries have achieved gender parity in primary education. Important advances have been made in other countries at the primary level, though much greater efforts are still needed in secondary education.

However, in E-9 countries, as elsewhere, the picture for the other goals is less positive. This is the case for early childhood care and education, learning opportunities for youth and adults, literacy and quality. While equally important to achieving EFA and promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction, these goals were not included among the MDGs, and have thus tended to be neglected.

Two issues are of overriding concern: illiteracy and poor educational quality.

Of the world's 771 million illiterate adults, 67 % live in the E-9 countries. This bears an enormous cost for human development and puts many countries at risk of not achieving EFA.

Second, the quality of education. Too many children are not reaching the last grade of primary school, even in countries with high enrolment rates. Too many still leave school without a basic command of core subjects.

Although quality has many dimensions, most would agree that the role of teachers is the most important and influential. It is not by chance that this E-9 meeting focuses on teachers as catalysts for change and on the need to improve teacher education and training. It is the foundation for reforming education systems.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global shortage of qualified teachers remains one of the main challenges for achieving EFA. UNESCO estimates that by 2015, 18 million new primary school teachers will be needed globally – 40% of them, namely more than 7 million, in the E-9 countries alone.

Population growth and increasing enrolment rates often place severe strains on the capacity of education systems. As countries advance towards universal primary education, there is increasing demand for teachers at secondary, technical and higher education levels. There is a particular lack of science and mathematics teachers. Even in countries with enough teachers, remote or disadvantaged areas often face serious teacher shortages.

But the challenge is more than one of numbers. It is about the quality of teachers and teaching to achieve good learning outcomes.

A recent McKinsey report that looked at high performing or successfully reforming school systems concluded that success is dependent upon three key factors. First, the rigour of teacher recruitment processes; second, the provision of relevant and ongoing teacher training; and, third, strong overall support structures – including systems for standard setting and regular monitoring and evaluation – to ensure that each learner succeeds.

The reality is that in far too many countries, teachers' dissatisfaction with their decline in status, poor working conditions, low salaries, lack of career progression and inadequate professional training has led many of them to leave the profession. Attrition, particularly in the first few years of teaching, is often high.

A quality education system cannot exist without consistent policy attention to the situation of teachers. The challenge is multi-faceted. It requires making the teaching profession more attractive and providing relevant and appropriate training, professional development opportunities, career advancement and fair working conditions so that teachers remain motivated.

Several E-9 countries have demonstrated innovation in teacher training, notably through the increasing use of open and distance learning approaches using a range of new information and communication technologies (ICTs). There have been many positive results, and the effective use of ICTs is a key area in which UNESCO is working to support Member States.

As I am sure you will know, the joint 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel provides an

international framework for the profession. These Recommendations set out guidelines and good practices on teachers' status, their training, working conditions, career progression and involvement in education decision-making through consultation and negotiation. UNESCO strongly advocates for the implementation of these Recommendations, monitored through the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel.

UNESCO, in partnership with Member States and external stakeholders, supports the design and implementation of viable, evidence-based, national policies and plans relating to teachers. We seek to build the capacity of teachers and teacher educators and to promote the exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned regarding teacher issues. The 2008 E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting provides us with the opportunity to do just this: to share experiences in current practices, recognize challenges, and identify possible areas for collaboration, particularly with respect to the following:

1. the attraction, preparation and deployment of teachers;
2. the employment conditions, retention, professional training and career prospects of teachers;
3. the use of ICTs and open and distance learning for teacher training.

Above all, let us learn from one another and then utilize our improved knowledge of what works to make education more inclusive and of better quality for all learners, notably with respect to the competencies, skills, attitudes and values imparted. In all of this, teachers are crucial.

In this regard, I am delighted to announce, as the Minister for Education of Indonesia has already indicated, that later this morning I will be holding a ceremony designating the Indonesian actress, Mrs Christine Hakim, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for teacher education in Southeast Asia. I am confident that her skill and dedication will help raise awareness of the vital role of teachers, of their needs, and of the constraints they often face. She will be a valuable ally in our efforts to achieve quality teaching and learning for all.

Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome the new trend in these E-9 ministerial meetings to focus on South-South cooperation and triangular (North-South-South) collaboration. Such forms of cooperation are becoming increasingly important in the context of globalization.

I believe that the E-9 initiative holds considerable potential as a vehicle and promoter of South-South cooperation, not only collectively among all nine countries, but also through specific bilateral and multi-partner linkages. Following the Monterrey recommendations and those of the governing bodies of UNESCO, I have put in place a fund to which Member States may contribute to facilitate greater collaboration of this kind. I believe we must propose further innovative models of South-South and triangular collaboration, which are persuasive in bringing the relevant partners together in mutual, long-term commitments.

In this regard, it is important to review developments since the Monterrey meeting and to use this gathering in Bali to consider how to further enhance the impact of the E-9 initiative, given your countries' increasingly substantial role in economic and political affairs. In particular, we hope that discussions and presentations will help to clarify the priority actions for durably improving teacher education and training in the E-9 countries. This is a key to higher quality education.

In closing, I would like once again to thank the Government of Indonesia, our hosts, for their welcome and for their support to the E-9 Initiative.

You will recall that when we met in Cairo, in December 2003, just over four years ago, the E-9 Initiative was seen to have lost some strength of purpose and identity. On that occasion, I had urged that the Initiative be reinvigorated, and pledged UNESCO's commitment to work with E-9 countries in forging a clearer vision and stronger framework for collaboration. This call to action was taken up by E-9 ministers in their final declaration, when they committed to "revitalize and realign the E-9 Initiative in light of post-Dakar developments so that the E-9 group plays a lead role within the EFA movement".

Following Cairo, there has been a renewed sense of purpose and determination. We must not lose this momentum, especially now, with just seven years left to the 2015 target date for meeting the Dakar goals.

I am very pleased to announce that Nigeria has generously offered to host the next E-9 ministerial meeting in 2010. As we look forward to this event, I urge E-9 countries to continue to strengthen cooperation, both within the context of EFA, and in education more broadly. You have the possibility to make a decisive contribution to education development worldwide.

Thank you very much for your attention.