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REPORT

on basic education in developing countries in the context of the United Nations
General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001
(2001/2030(INI))

Committee on Development and Cooperation

Rapporteur: Glenys Kinnock

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

At the sitting of 3 May 2001 the President of Parliament announced that the Committee on Development and Cooperation had been authorised to draw up an own-initiative report, pursuant to Rule 163 of the Rules of Procedure, on access to education for children in developing countries.

At the sitting of 5 July 2001, the President of the Parliament authorised the Committee on Development and Cooperation to change the title of the report to 'Report on basic education in developing countries in the context of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001'.

The Committee on Development and Cooperation had appointed Glenys Kinnock rapporteur at its meeting of 6 March 2001.

The committee considered the draft report at its meetings of 20 June 2001 and 10 July 2001.

At the latter meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution by 23 votes to 1, with no abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: Joaquim Miranda, chairman; Margrietus J. van den Berg, vice-chairman; Fernando Fernández Martín, vice-chairman; Glenys Kinnock, rapporteur; John Alexander Corrie, Paul Coûteaux, Nirj Deva, Concepció Ferrer (for Domenico Mennitti), Jean-Claude Fruteau, Richard Howitt, Renzo Imbeni, Karin Junker, Bashir Khanbhai, Karsten Knolle, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Emilio Menéndez del Valle (for José María Mendiluce Pereiro), Luisa Morgantini (for Yasmine Boudjenah), Hervé Novelli, Didier Rod, Ulla Margrethe Sandbæk, Francisca Sauquillo Pérez del Arco, Bob van den Bos, Stavros Xarchakos and Jürgen Zimmerling.

The report was tabled on 13 July 2001.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

European Parliament resolution on basic education in developing countries in the context of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001 (2001/2030(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child,
 - having regard to the World Summit for Children in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, the UN Social Summit in 1995 and the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2001,
 - having regard to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in New York, 19-21 September 2001,
 - having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development and Cooperation (A5-0278/2001),
- A. whereas Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established education as a fundamental human right,
- B. having specific regard to the commitments included in the Dakar Action Framework and whereas action must be taken to enable those commitments to be honoured,
- C. whereas the UN Special Session on Children will review the progress made on the delivery of children's rights, including education, and will adopt a global agenda and plan of action for the new decade,
- D. whereas the first revised draft outcome document for the UN Special Session on Children highlighted ten imperatives, including that, "all girls and boys must receive a compulsory, free basic education of good quality",
- E. whereas the Commission and the Council issued a Joint Statement, on 10 November 2000, which supported the view that there should be a global commitment to universal primary education, and which identified education as a development priority,
- F. whereas 130 million children have never attended school, another 150 million children start primary school but drop out before they learn to read and write, and 900 million people in the developing world are illiterate,
- G. stressing the universal and indivisible nature of human rights including the right to education, and that there is no place for discrimination of any kind on the grounds of sex, disability, race, ethnic origin, religion or culture,
- H. whereas two-thirds of children out of school are girls, enrolment rates for girls are still behind those for boys and drop out rates for girls are higher,
- I. whereas children with disabilities are among the most disadvantaged educationally, and

mainstream educational provision in many countries explicitly excludes them,

- J. noting that emergency provision for many children who are displaced, or affected by conflict, drought or famine, rarely extends to appropriate education, even when displacement and instability are prolonged,
 - K. stressing the importance of peace education where children are victims of violent conflict, as is the case with children in refugee camps,
 - L. believing that tackling the education crisis is one of the most effective strategies at our disposal for breaking the cycle of poverty, and is key to sustainable human development and efforts to make progress towards the internationally agreed 2015 human development targets,
 - M. regretting the fact that since the Dakar Conference there has been minimal progress and a lack of leadership in coordinating international efforts to tackle the crisis in education,
 - N. whereas on current trends we will not meet the 2005 target for gender equity in education, particularly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, and the 2015 target for universal primary education will be comprehensively missed, with an estimated 75 million children remaining out of school,
 - O. whereas efforts are being seriously undermined by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as a result of which 10 per cent of teachers in the worst affected countries in Africa are expected to die over the next five years, and the number of AIDS orphans are predicted to rise to more than 20% of all school-age children,
 - P. whereas global economic inequalities and the burden of debt has left many governments without the resources to provide education for all children, and structural adjustment programmes have forced governments to reduce public sector spending,
 - Q. believing that the classroom experience should be child centred, relevant to the local community and in the local language, and that curricula need to be flexible and relevant to children's lives,
 - R. noting that the Global Campaign for Education has called for spending priorities to be reordered in those countries where military expenditure is high. to ensure that education has a greater emphasis in the national budget,
 - S. believing that the achievement of basic education for all is a precondition for more equitable patterns of globalisation, and for the closure of the digital divide,
 - T. whereas donors, including the EU, should develop joint guidelines on policy, operating procedures, accounting systems and monitoring and evaluation, and donors should end the practice of aid tying in the education sector, in both the provision of goods and services,
 - U. noting that in view of the capacity constraints faced by developing countries it is important to set realistic time scales for the production of participatory national education plans, and that 2002 may be a difficult deadline to meet,
1. Welcomes the UN Special Session on Children and recognises that this Conference is a

vital opportunity to highlight the critical importance of basic education for all;

2. Believes that free and compulsory and quality education should be made available to all children, up to the age of 15 as stipulated by the ILO;
3. Calls urgently for a Global Initiative on education, as promised at Dakar, and for the donor community to urgently establish a clear time-frame for the development of such a Global Initiative;
4. Calls for the delivery of essential funding, through aid and debt relief which should be at least \$4 million a year and specifically focused on the poorest countries, as a means of ensuring that no government which is striving to achieving free, good quality primary education for all, will fail through a lack of resources;
5. Calls for reform of the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment policies to ensure that they support rather than undermine free, quality education;
6. Reiterates that, during the budget negotiations in 2001, the European Parliament, together with the Council, called for European Commission aid to education to be doubled and noted that specific targets for expenditure on education have been included in regional budget headings;
7. Believes that eligibility for assistance should be contingent on poor countries developing strategies that are capable of providing good quality education;
8. Welcomes the European Commission's commitment to support for sectoral development programmes run by national authorities, with the participation of civil society, and with a clear recognition that it is necessary to ensure that everyone's efforts are complementary and coherent;
9. Calls on the Commission to submit a proposal for a directive to Parliament and the Council which serves to break the link between aid for the education sector and aid intended to finance the supply of goods and the provision of services within the framework of EU aid programmes;
10. Urges the Commission to support UNESCO's tripartite action plan which includes the drawing up of national action plans, regional and subregional technical meetings and UNESCO's coordination of Education for All partners;
11. Welcomes the Commission's coordination of Member States efforts through the experts working party and in the UNESCO Working Group dealing with the Framework for Action, and believes that this group could play an important role in the development of common strategies and positions;
12. Welcomes the participation of the Commission on the Steering Committee of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, which will mean that the Commission is involved in political dialogue with African Education Ministers and discussions on the provision of technical assistance;
13. Calls on the Commission to work and coordinate closely with national governments, civil

society, NGO's, UN partners and the International Financial Institutions when defining National Indicative Plans, and to work with national governments to assign responsibilities and avoid duplication;

14. Stresses the need for the Commission to have adequate human and financial resources at its disposal in order to fulfil its coordination tasks and make it possible to play a leading role;
15. Calls on the EU to take the lead in developing an innovative partnership between governments and the private sector, in order to mobilise \$1 billion per annum for Education For All;
16. Believes that no child should be excluded from education because of an inability to pay, and calls on all Governments to establish a clear timetable for rapidly eliminating direct and indirect fees for primary education, while maintaining a high level of, or enhancing, the quality of education;
17. Believes that funding must be made available for non-standard development contexts, including national emergencies, conflict situations, refugee camps, or when governments ignore the rights of groups of children;
18. Believes that national action plans should define clear targets for accelerating progress towards universal primary education, and should identify funding shortfalls to be filed through increased aid under the global initiative;
19. Believes that education sector development strategies should be integrated into national poverty reduction strategies, and should be produced by national governments in consultation with civil society, local communities and donors;
20. Stresses the importance of the participation of civil society in the development of national education strategies, and believes that parents, teachers and their unions and poor communities should be encouraged to participate in the preparation of national education plans, in order to help assess the problems and identify the solutions;
21. Notes that the decentralisation of education within a state is generally a welcome development which can empower local communities, but stresses that central government must retain responsibility for providing the bulk of the necessary funding, and for equipping local officials with adequate training, authority and resources to manage education systems effectively at local level;
22. Calls on civil society to hold governments to account for their commitment to achieve education for all;
23. Calls on all countries with high military expenditures to re-examine their national spending priorities in favour of greater contributions to the education sector;
24. Stresses the importance of paying special attention to the education of girls and believes that unequal opportunities for girls could start to be redressed by recruiting and training local female teachers, eliminating the male bias in curricula and related materials, free school meals, accelerated withdrawal fees for girl students, encouraging parents to

participate in school management and locating schools closer to the communities which they serve;

25. Stresses that schools should be 'zones of safety' where the rights of children are respected and where incidents of sexual harassment and violence in and around schools are documented and taken seriously and that there is an understanding that this is a major cause of children, in particular girls, dropping out of school;
26. Points out that the poor quality of education is a major factor in pupils dropping out of school and calls for particular attention to be paid to the need to improve the quality of education provided, amongst other things by adapting the school calendar (three words deleted) to suit local needs, taking into account the demands of seasonal labour, and teaching lessons in local languages;
27. Stresses that it is critically important to improve training and support for teachers, to ensure that they have fair and regular salaries, properly equipped classrooms and quality textbooks;
28. Notes that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has had a devastating impact on the schooling system, teachers and pupils in many developing countries, and calls for all programmes designed to tackle HIV/AIDS to take this fully into account;
29. Believes that people of all ages, including early school leavers, should have the opportunity to benefit from life-long learning programmes and have access even to primary education which they may have missed during their childhood;
30. Calls on the donor community to support education in the Information and Communication Technologies, where the basic education level makes this possible;
31. Considers that special attention should be given to the reintegration of former child soldiers into society; calls on the international donor community to launch programmes for the re-education of former child soldiers;
32. Calls on the Member States at the next Intergovernmental Conference to include a legal base in the EU Treaties to promote and protect the best interests of the child in all EU policy, programmes and legislation;
33. Welcomes the recent commitments given by the Commission to the integration of a child rights perspective in the development co-operation instruments of the Community and to issuing strategic implementation guidelines, and calls on the Commission to implement this commitment without delay;
34. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the UNGASS Secretariat, UNICEF, UNESCO, the national delegations at the UN General Assembly and the Secretary General of the UN, the World Bank and the IMF.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Education For All - An Achievable Target?

"I have seen how one year of school changes a child.... I have seen a generation of children armed with education lift up a nation." Graca Machel.

The fundamental right to education is being denied to millions of the world's children. The majority of these children are in the developing world, and almost two thirds of them are girls.

Over 50 years ago the Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlined a vision of the world that included the right to education for all. Article 28 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified human rights treaty, clearly recognises,

"The right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right States parties shall, in particular, make primary education compulsory and available free to all."

The international community has also set a number of targets for education, most recently at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. This includes free and compulsory education for all, halving adult illiteracy by 2015, the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary schools by 2005, the extension of learning opportunities for adults and young people and improvements in the actual quality of education provided.

The education targets form an integral part of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) human development goals for 2015. They include a reduction in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by at least half by 2015; a reduction in infant and child mortality rates by two-thirds by 2015; and a reduction in maternal mortality rates by three-quarters by 2015.

Therefore, on paper at least, education - notably basic education - has been put at the heart of the global strategy to eradicate poverty, and the European Union has an active role to play in this.

In September 2001, there will be a UN Special Session on Children in New York. This Session will be an opportunity to make basic education a binding right for all children, and will need to develop practical strategies on education and seek assurances that these strategies will be backed up with the necessary resources.

The Session will also provide a new, and much needed, focus on the fact that the totally inadequate provision of basic education is the most powerful brake on progress towards meeting the targets that have been set on poverty eradication. On the basis of current evidence these targets are simply unachievable.

Defining The Education Crisis

The human costs of the education crisis are inestimable. UNICEF puts it in stark terms.

"Nearly one billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names - much less operate a computer, or understand a simple application form."

Globally, it is estimated that 900 million people over the age of 15, or one in six people, are functionally illiterate. That number is rising, and according to Oxfam UK, *"the next generation of illiterates is already lining up to take its place"*.

If we were to imagine every child of primary school age in Europe and North America, and then multiply that number by two, we have a total which gets close to the number of children who either never start school, or who drop out of education.

The shocking disparity in educational opportunity between the North and South is such that in the industrialised world, a five-year-old child can, on average, expect to receive 15-17 years of full-time education. In much of Africa and South Asia, a child of five can only expect less than five years of full-time education. In Bukina Faso, Mali, Niger and Mozambique it is only three years.

According to UNICEF, in total 130 million children, or one in five of the total number of children in developing countries, have no access to primary education. Nearly two-thirds of this total are girls. A further 150 million children will drop of school before they have the chance to acquire even basic numeracy and literacy skills - again most of them will be girls.

Only 3% of Africa's children proceed beyond secondary school. In Latin America, in spite of the region's relative prosperity and high enrolment rates, almost one third of all children fail to complete primary school.

Millions more children struggle in terrible learning situations without pens, desks or even a roof over their heads. It is estimated that 15% of schools have no buildings. And, in urban areas teachers often stand in front of classes of more than 100 children.

A lack of investment in education translates directly into classrooms without books, schools without sanitation and demoralised and underpaid teachers. In Africa, for example, it costs over one fifth of average households' incomes to send a single child to primary school.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world where the numbers of children out of school are actually rising. By 2015, the region will account for more than three-quarters of children not in school. This has profound implications for Africa's place in the world economy.

We must also acknowledge that developing countries are locked into international systems which militate against progress. Clearly, wider political and economic changes will be necessary if those fine education targets are to be met.

Priorities must be set, North and South, and workable solutions must be identified by local groups, communities and families. A prescriptive Northern approach is clearly not appropriate.

Communities and families understand that they are being denied the very foundations for development and also their place in the global economy. They are well aware that their children are being refused the opportunity to be part of a healthy, literate future - a future which includes the prospect of work and security.

To be part of a modern global economy, and to have the opportunity to join knowledge based systems of production clearly depends on being able to tackle basic literacy and numeracy at an early age. This is true and understood wherever you live in the world.

Education as the main catalyst for human development and poverty alleviation

"Education is the true essence of human development. Without education, development can be neither broad based nor sustained" Mahbub Al Haq.

Education is not only a basic human right but its provision also makes sound economic sense. Education can help in the quest to eradicate poverty and promote peace. In addition, education often decreases social burdens on governments, increases family incomes and produces a larger and better-prepared workforce.

The evidence of a link between illiteracy and income poverty suggests that the slow progress on literacy has been a major factor in the slow rate of progress towards meeting the 2015 target to cut extreme poverty.

Family budgets clearly reflect the educational status of that family. In Zambia, for example, rural women who have no education are twice as likely to be living in poverty. Each additional year in school is estimated to raise the output of an African farmer by 8% a year. This is often the difference between access to essential medicines and healthcare and adequate food, or going without.

Exclusion from education is also synonymous with an inability to exploit market opportunities or take a share in the financial resources on offer.

And what is true for households is also the case for national finances, where average income levels often mirror levels of access to education. For example, in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador it is estimated that each additional year of education generates a 5-10% increase in informal sector earnings.

As well as being a fundamental right education has the potential to deliver human rights more generally. Children should be encouraged to think critically to understand their rights and how to realise them. It is education which gives confidence, self-esteem and the ability to question authority and understand what your rights and responsibilities are.

There is also a direct correlation between child mortality rates and the level of parental education. For example, it is estimated that a 10% increase in girls' primary enrolment would decrease infant mortality by 4.1 deaths per 100,000. And, each extra year of school enjoyed by a girl means a reduction in fertility rates and a decline in maternal mortality rates.

In Ghana, the children of educated mothers are twice as likely to survive their fifth birthday

than children of uneducated mothers. And in Kerala, India, where all children go to primary school, the infant mortality rate, and the fertility rate, are actually the lowest in the entire world.

In South Asia, the fertility rate for women with 7 or more years of education is 35% lower than for women with no education. Women who have received some education marry later, and space births over longer periods. This is all connected to the reality that better education makes it easier to earn a living, and that in turn often means that women marry later. Women, by definition take more control over their own fertility, and all these factors are key to achieving the 2015 target for reducing infant and maternal mortality rates.

Vietnam has also achieved high levels of female literacy in spite of the fact that more than half of its population lives in desperate poverty. This has led to progress in many areas, for instance, child mortality rates are three times lower than in Pakistan, where 74% of women aged 20-24 have not completed primary education.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, child deaths are declining at less than one quarter of the required rate in order to meet the 2015 target. Unless we see urgent and dramatic changes, and in particular a concerted effort to close the gender gap in education, then this region will account for 70% of the short fall in relation to the 2015 target on child mortality. In this, as in other cases, the target looks increasingly difficult to achieve.

It is also evident that those who understand the importance of health, sanitation and nutrition have a better chance of reducing the incidence of preventable illness and death.

The fundamental point, which is evident from these facts, is that education and increasing incomes simultaneously promote human development.

According to Amartya Sen, Winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics,

"The creation of social opportunities, through services such as public education, and health care.... can contribute both to economic development and to significant reductions in mortality rates ... reinforcing the influence of basic education. The pioneering example of enhancing economic growth through social opportunity, especially in basic education, is, of course, Japan."

'A Decade of Inaction'

The World Conference for Children, in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, developed an international consensus that education is the most important weapon that we have in our arsenal as we work to combat poverty, promote democracy and human rights, strengthen the role of women and protect the environment.

The Conference set bold targets and promised new working practices. Developing country governments promised policy reforms which would prioritise education, and in turn Northern Governments promised to support these efforts with additional aid, debt relief and the reform of structural adjustment packages. Over 150 governments promised that by the year 2000 adult literacy rates would be halved, and that all children would enjoy the right to a good

primary education.

The Jomtien Conference was followed by a mid-term review in Amman, in 1995, and ten years later by a World Education Forum on Education for All in Dakar, Senegal.

Instead of the delivery of those promises to increase aid, industrialised countries have actually slashed budgets to the lowest level ever. It is estimated that Sub Saharan Africa alone has lost \$4 billion in the last decade. Specifically in the education sector, developed countries invest just 1% of total aid in basic education, and only 10% of total aid goes to education. This puts the possibility of achieving the education targets in extreme jeopardy.

Similarly, developing countries have failed, for a variety of reasons, to translate rhetoric about the importance that they attach to education into real budgetary allocations. Between 1980 and 1987, in Latin America and the Caribbean, real spending on education was reduced by 40% and in sub-Saharan Africa it was cut by 65%.

In addition, the demands from urban elite's for higher education are too often more likely to be heard than the voice of the rural poor, who want to simply send their children to school. In Africa, there are some countries where the public subsidy for a university student is 100 times that of a primary school pupil. According to UNESCO, the most extreme example is the Comoros, which spends 8% of GNP per capita on each pre-primary or primary school pupil, and 1,168% on each college student.

30 million children in India are not in school - more than any other country - and the national educational infrastructure is in a state of chronic disrepair. Yet, India spends less than 1% of GDP on primary education. This is one of the lowest levels of investment in the developing world and is, for example, less than half of the national investment in Uganda, which is a far poorer country. In comparison, India spends more on military equipment than on education.

Governments in sub-Saharan Africa spend around \$7 billion a year on the military. This is more than double what they spend each year on primary education.

Significantly, under the European Community's Lomé IV Agreement only 20% of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries ranked education and training as a high priority. Indeed, 45 countries saw it as a low priority, and just 6 countries had no education or training projects at all with the European Commission.

The EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement does, however, offer a new sector based approach to development assistance. This will hopefully be strengthened by the reform and restructuring of the Development Directorates, and the proposed evaluation of aid to education and training. The challenge will be for the EU to work with the UN, civil society and international NGO's to advocate that ACP countries should give priority to basic education in their National Indicative Plans (NIP's). The United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Common Country Assessment and other mechanisms should complement the work being done on NIP's.

The Dakar 'Education For All' Conference

The World Education Conference in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 took a number of decisive steps

forward. Indeed, it was a litmus test for the international community's capacity to achieve the goal of universal primary education. At Dakar, countries reaffirmed the commitment to a broad vision of education;

*"An education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each person's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies."*¹

Dakar Commitments

1. Reaffirmation of the right of all children to a **free, good quality education**. This commitment was absent from the Jomtien declaration in 1990.
2. A call for all developing country governments to prepare, by 2002, a participatory national action plan, with civil society involvement, setting out how it would achieve the international target of universal primary education by 2015, and gender equality in education by 2005.
3. Established the principle that, *"no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources."*¹
4. Committed the international community to supporting national education reforms, *"by developing with immediate effect a global initiative aimed at developing the strategies, and mobilising the resources, needed to provide effective support to national efforts."* It is particularly encouraging that Northern governments have recognised that without additional financial resources many countries will simply be unable to achieve the education targets.

The Financial Times newspaper, commenting on the Dakar Framework for Action, concluded:

"How soon the initiative is delivered, how it will be implemented and how it will be funded, will together prove the acid test of whether a broken promise has been followed by empty words."

Now, the words need to be translated into practical strategies.

The Global Campaign for Education, an alliance of NGO's and representatives from civil society from over 200 countries, has proposed that there should be an inventory which should be coordinated by UNESCO, and would track each country's progress towards implementation of a viable and participatory Education For All Plan. This would identify resources gaps and blockages, and would point to existing and potential mechanisms for external support.

The Global Campaign for Education's proposal for an inventory would offer 3 main benefits:

1. The promotion of transparency and coordination between donors and Southern Governments.

¹ UNESCO: The Dakar Framework for Action, Paris, 2000.

2. The mobilisation of new funding commitments for particular countries (not a central fund) in response to demonstrated need and capacity.
3. The provision of a continuous monitoring and review mechanism, which would increase the accountability of Southern Governments and donors.

The EU's Role

The EU has a central role to play in follow up to Dakar, critically in terms of coordination and the promotion of gender equality. The Development Commissioner, Poul Nielson, understands that the policy targets which have been agreed need to be urgently translated into action and real changes.

It will not be enough to say that the Dakar commitments have been incorporated into existing operating procedures, project monitoring and evaluating procedures. The Commission will need to elaborate how exactly it intends to implement the Education For All goals.

Poverty reduction is now the overarching objective of the EC's development policy, as set out in the Council Statement on 10 November 2000, and the Joint Statement, also of November 2000, in which the Commission and the Council confirmed that the principle of sustainable, equitable and participatory human and social development would be mainstreamed in the Community's Development Policy.

The EU allocates significant funds to education, although its focus on primary education has historically been poor. Since Dakar, and under the 2001 Budget, the European Commission is committed to increasing its budget to primary education. Priority must be given to funding sector-wide programmes, which put national governments in the driving seat.

Article 25 of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, on social sector development, briefly refers to, *"improving education and training, and building capacity and skills"*. Yet the words 'basic education' get no mention and the Compendium Guidelines are unfocussed.

According to the European Commission, a study of Community investment in ACP countries shows that the amount of funding for education and training has increased substantially, and that a clear priority is now being given to primary education. A recent study also showed that sectoral dialogue has improved in a number of ACP countries.

In terms of improving donor coordination, in 1996, the EU adopted a Code of Conduct, which applies specifically to the education sector. The Code aims to ensure that:

- Information on relevant interventions is available to all other partners;
- Adherence to maximum consultancy rates;
- Donor funded Technical Assistance is government driven and managed;
- National consensus building and support for local co-ordination mechanisms are encouraged;
- Donors work to fit in with government schedules and procedures for financial procurement, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

However, the ActionAid Alliance recently concluded that the Code has been *"poorly*

disseminated and widely ignored". In Tanzania, for example, 3 EU Member States had never even heard of it.

It is clear that donors, including specifically the European Commission, must ensure that support to governments' efforts to achieve the EFA goals is not undermined by inefficient, uncoordinated donor practices. The Commission has a special role to play in coordinating the work of all of those working on National Indicative Plans, and should exploit to the full its participation on the Steering Committee of the Commission of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

The European Commission, and EU Member States, have not played a particularly strong leadership role in terms of follow up to Dakar within the multilateral fora, despite the useful role played by the European Commission at the Dakar Conference. One significant reason for this is the lack of capacity within the Directorate-General for Development, currently just one member of staff.

However, under the Belgian Presidency, July to December 2001, the European Commission is expected to produce a Communication on education, which will have to be approved by EU governments. It is imperative that this Communication is given the same priority as the groundbreaking work being done by the European Commission on the EU's Programme of Action on Communicable Diseases.

EU development policy must now strive to mainstream children's rights. For this to happen there must be a focal point for children's issues within the Commission and budgetary resources must be made available specifically for children. The European Parliament has a role to play here in the development of enforceable mechanisms, in view of the fact that the European Commission and Member States have been slow to respond to this need.

The Role of Civil Society

Civil society has a critical role to play in mobilising the political will to fulfil the promise to provide free, quality education for all.

The Global Education Campaign, which was launched in 1998, now includes organisations from over 200 countries. It is an innovative alliance incorporating the world-wide campaign to end child labour, teachers unions, non-governmental organisation working with disabled people in India and rural communities in Ghana, and international development organisations. It is critical that this campaign holds governments to account for the commitments they have entered into.

At the heart of the Campaign is the belief that progress on education requires political mobilisation and a fundamental change in attitude.

Action Aid cites the outcome of the Dakar Conference as clear proof that broad based civil society alliances, through public mobilisation, can influence the outcome of international events. The challenge now is to maintain pressure over the long term to ensure that these commitments are implemented.

Debt and Education

The world's poorest nations owe \$2.2 trillion in external debt - which affects their ability to invest in education. Between 1990 and 1998 in sub-Saharan Africa debt service payments, of around \$12 billion per annum, represented more than double the annual spending on basic education.

Honduras, Nicaragua and Zambia have all been spending four times as much on debt servicing than on basic education. In fact, in some countries debt payments exceed spending on basic health and education combined.

The Jomtien commitment to search for "innovative and equitable" solutions to the debt crisis has clearly not produced results.

The debt burden impacts directly on the national budget and on Ministries such as education and health. In Zambia, attempts to build schools, train teachers and buy books are impeded by the fact that education spending remains far lower as a proportion of GDP, and per capita, than in the mid 1980s. The fact is that the progress achieved in many post-independence African countries has actually gone into reverse.

One of the consequences of unsustainable debt is the diversion of funds away from the social sectors. Put simply, if the debt issue were to be dealt with then there would be substantially more money available to spend on education and other basic services.

Tanzania, where 2 million children are not in school and there is one textbook for every 30 children, still spends 6 times as much on debt than it does on primary education.

In Mozambique, 33% of the national budget goes towards servicing the country's debt and just 8% is spent on education, and without further loans the Government will be simply unable to function. Reducing budgets, of course, means increasing school fees, which in turn means reducing possibilities of education for the poor.

The HIPC initiative, announced in 1996, has been largely unable to tackle this crisis. Of the 12 countries receiving debt relief, 9 are still spending more on debt than on health and primary education. The Drop the Debt Campaign now urges the international financial institutions to follow the 100% debt cancellation initiative undertaken by the G7 countries.

In addition, the wider reform of structural adjustment programmes has not happened, and expert observers remain convinced that IMF programmes have undermined efforts to deliver universal primary education and other services.

The IMF's own data shows that per capita spending on education in those sub-Saharan African countries with IMF's programmes, falls on average by 0.7% a year. Some countries, like Cote D'Ivoire, Zambia and Zimbabwe even reduced their education spending in per capita terms, under IMF programmes by 8% or more per year.

IMF programmes in East Asia prolonged and deepened the recession with devastating consequences for education. In Indonesia, for example, the education budget fell by one-third, and in just 2 years the dropout rate for children from poor households quadrupled.

Combating Educational Exclusion

"In Zambia, the average pupil walks 7km to school often hungry, tired and malnourished, suffering from intestinal worms, and is sweating and lacks concentration on arrival. He or she sits with at least 50 others in a similarly poor condition. Their receptivity is minimal. The teacher is poorly paid, poorly educated and badly motivated. He speaks bad English but still tries to teach in that language. He does not know his subjects well and uses poor teaching methods. The acoustics and ventilation are bad. There are no chalks, the blackboard shines and there are too few pads or pencils. The school is an alien world." Thomas Hammeburg, former Chair of the Committee on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This is a crisis which principally selects its victims on the basis of wealth and gender. Poor children are simply less likely to enrol in school and far more likely to drop out.

In India, for example, the right to education is enshrined in the Constitution, and the richest fifth of the population now enjoys universal primary school enrolment. However, less than half of the children of the poorest fifth of households get past first grade.

Children are generally not in school as a result of a number of social, political, cultural factors. However, research has consistently shown that it is the cost of education, whether directly in the form of fees, or a contribution to the teachers salary, or indirectly in the form of payments for uniforms, books or equipment, which places education beyond the reach of many poor families. The direct costs to parents can reach up to 20% of a family's income.

Formal school fees should be abolished, and pressure on parents to provide resources for schools should end. The need for the public provision of education should be better understood, and national educational plans should clearly identify changes, which would encourage and increase the participation of the poorest children. It is critical that we remove all barriers that exclude large numbers of the poorest children.

UNICEF and other partners are currently working to determine how to abolish costs and fees to poor parents, while still ensuring improvements in quality. Some countries have abolished fees but because they do not have in place other mechanisms to cover the real costs of education, then quality has in many cases declined. This can mean that within a couple of years enrolment rates start go down again, usually affecting girls first.

In many countries, fewer rural children attend school than urban children, and the disabled child is often barely considered. Indeed, according to UNESCO less than 1% of children with special needs make it into school.

In Zambia, more than half of all disabled adults have received no education. A total which is almost double the proportion for the population at large. There are only 20 special schools able to cater for just 25,000 children, out of a disabled population of over 175,000 of primary-school age.

According to Save the Children in Ghana, almost 69% of children with a learning disability do not receive a formal education. A recent survey found that teachers often seek to dissuade the child from continuing with their education, and 80% of the children with learning disabilities in the survey were not attending school.

The distance of a school from home is also an important factor.

In Egypt, for example, if a school is 1km, instead of 2km, away, enrolment goes up by 4% for boys, but increases by 18% for girls. In Pakistan, parents cite distance as the main reason for keeping girls at home. South Asia has more children out of school than the rest of the world together. This is, of course, the environment in which child labour flourishes.

Tackling educational exclusion also means addressing the issue of child labour. In many places, work and school co-exists for children, and in some cases children's schooling depends upon their working. In fact, many developing country children work in order to pay for the books, paper and pencils, transportation, examination fees and sometimes even tuition necessary to attend school. The relationship between work and school varies enormously from country to country.

There are an estimated 250 million child labourers worldwide. They come from the poorest - usually female headed - families. We need to create conditions that allow children to move out of work and into school. This will mean improving family incomes so that there is no longer a dependence on the childrens' wages. And the EU needs to continue to work with the ILO to eradicate the worst and most hazardous forms of child labour.

The Apartheid of Gender

Young girls are bearing the brunt of the education crisis. Two-thirds of the children not in school, and a similar proportion of adults who are illiterate, are female. Even when there is universal primary education - such as in Europe - we know that gender sensitive initiatives and measures are still essential.

There simply will not be a significant or sustainable transformation in societies, and no lasting reduction in global poverty, until girls receive the quality education they need and deserve. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen.

According to Dr Eddah Gachukia, from the Forum for African Women for Education (FAWE), *"Girls and women are the intellectual resource in Africa that will contribute to the crucial change the continent is looking for."*

In the state of Kerala, in India, women live 24 years longer on average than women in Bihar. This reflects the fact that Kerala prioritises girls education and female literacy.

When the costs of education are high, and the perceived benefits few, there is little incentive to allocate scarce household resources to education. This often hits female children hardest, such that girls are often the last into school and the first out in times of financial hardship.

Girls often have a lower social status and their future is perceived as being limited to a domestic and mothering role. School is not seen, therefore, as a way of preparing to earn a living.

The level of awareness amongst education policy makers about the impediments to girl's

education in terms of access, retention and performance has improved significantly as a result of focussed advocacy work. The major problem is now moving from awareness to action on the ground. Ministries of Education, and other education providers must, for example, put in place concrete programmes to increase the enrolment of girls at all levels of education, to make sure that girls do not drop out of school and that they perform well, especially in Maths, Science and Technology.

If one goes to most rural areas in Africa, for example, girls are still married off at age 12 or 13, teenage pregnancy is common and girls are expelled from school as a result. As recent evidence from South Africa shows girls often suffer various forms of sexual harassment from teachers, fellow students and community members. Also the school curriculum, textbooks and teaching methods are still gender insensitive. Girls need support to build their self-confidence and assertiveness. In addition, young girls are increasingly becoming carers for their siblings when their parents die of HIV/AIDS, and UN data shows that the infection rates for adolescent girls and young women in Sub-Saharan Africa may be as much as 5 times higher than those of boys.

Education systems, however, often have no concrete strategies and plans on how to eliminate these glowing problems. In response, the Forum for African Women for Education has recommended that;

Education For All Country Action Plans should take all of these concerns into account when formulating policies and strategies.

In order for progress to be made then capacities will need to be strengthened. This means that gender training should be given in Education Ministries and statistical data should be kept and evaluations made.

The World Bank has now in fact identified 31 girls education target countries, where they will assess country programmes and monitor progress. This is a welcome initiative, especially since it includes initiatives to promote the recruitment of far more women teachers, who will provide the necessary role models.

HIV/AIDS

The most profound affect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is felt in the education sector. Hard won gains in school enrolment are simply being eroded. Schooling is disrupted when teachers are absent because of illness, death or the need to care for relatives.

Zambia, for example, lost 1,300 teachers from AIDS in the first 10 months of 1998. This is more than two-thirds of the number of all new teachers that were trained that year.

In addition, HIV positive teachers are leaving schools in rural areas so that they can be nearer to hospitals and other health care. There is also the impact of the stigma attached to AIDS sufferers and this leads to a higher rate of teacher turnover. As a result an increasing number of teachers have to take larger classes.

Schools have a critical role to play in efforts to ensure that children are educated about all aspects of the pandemic, including the promotion of behaviour which reduces the risk of

infection. Country efforts to develop school based programmes to control HIV/ AIDS have unfortunately been seriously affected.

HIV/ AIDS affects children, who drop out of school when their families can't afford to pay fees when the breadwinner falls ill. Girls in particular are often kept at home to care for family members. There are 13 million AIDS orphans who face a very uncertain future. Critically, the AIDS crisis has put an enormous strain on already scarce public resources. As a result, there is less money to hire and train teachers to replace those who have died. Educational quality also suffers when fewer resources are available for classrooms, clean water and latrines.

It is also important to realise that African countries, that have benefited from partial debt cancellation, still pay \$1.4 billion each year to creditors. This is precisely the amount of money that UNAIDS estimates the same countries need to increase their efforts against HIV/AIDS to a realistic level.

The Quality of Education

Education has to be high quality, child centred and gender sensitive. However, in many countries education can mean never having even held a pencil. Amongst many other things, schools need good quality textbooks and materials, pre- and in-service teacher training programmes and comprehensive nutritional programmes.

According to UNICEF, schools should also be "zones of safety" for children, or a place where they can drink safe water, have decent sanitation and be in an environment where they are respected.

All the regions of the world are concerned about the quality of the education they are offering, and see this as a priority. However, about half of the pupils in Latin America who attend school for 6 years do not achieve even basic literacy. In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 60% of children leave primary school functionally illiterate. Therefore, action on enrolment and retention needs to be accompanied by action to improve the quality and the relevance of education.

Structural Adjustment programmes, required by the World Bank and IMF, have affected education budgets and teachers salaries. Salaries in Africa, for example, have gone down so much that primary school teachers often receive less than half the amount of the household absolute poverty line. They are demoralised, badly trained and demotivated.

According to UNICEF, in Togo, more than one third of primary school teachers only have a primary education themselves. And, in Uruguay, one of Latin America's most prosperous countries, 70% of teachers have never been trained to teach.

Also, if children are taught in a language which is not the one they use at home, especially when their parents are illiterate, then this increases the problems and lead to more children dropping out. How can a child be expected to become literate in a language they have never heard outside the classroom?

Teaching in the mother tongue, especially in the early years of education, lessens the

likelihood of alienation and sends a clear message to the child that their language and their experience is relevant and valued. Teaching young children in European languages is simply inappropriate in many contexts.

In Somalia, for example, Save the Children Fund run programmes where children have the choice to become literate in their own language. Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe are some of the countries which have introduced teaching in mother tongue languages in their primary schools.

The Digital Divide

In Europe, we talk about a computer in every classroom, or about linking up all schools to the Internet. This language is, however, foreign to children who haven't even got pencils and books.

80% of schools in the EU are now connected to the Internet for educational purposes. 90% of the world's telecommunications traffic takes place within and between Europe, the US and countries of the Pacific Rim. At the same time, half of the world population has never used a telephone, and certainly never logged on to the Internet.

The key to prosperity and economic security will depend more and more on education. A failure to tackle the crisis in education will increase the gap between rich and poor and will have implications for global conflict and stability. It is admirable that the G7 have made strong commitments to access to information technology for the developing world. We should, however, not lose sight of the fact that in a country where, for instance, only 1 in 2 children go through even the primary school system, and where there are serious levels of illiteracy and innumeracy, then realistically new technologies have very little relevance, and are simply not an option until literacy levels are tackled.

The foundations of a child's learning must first of all be prepared and built. It is, therefore, imperative that basic education be given the attention that it deserves.

The EU should and can now provide the moral lead on basic education, in order that this divide between the information rich and information poor can be addressed.

Children in Conflict

Violent conflict is, of course, a major barrier to education. While it is difficult to give precise figures, a significant number of the 130 million children not in primary school are living in countries that have been, or are being, disrupted by war. Schools are often targeted and teachers put at risk. Widespread and severe conflict may also result in the collapse of the formal education system.

Education is understood to be the best way to help heal the wounds caused by armed conflict. Getting children back, and into, school gives a sense of normal life returning. Even in emergencies, UNICEF and UNESCO provide basic kits for children, and well understand the need to education, even if this has to be under trees in refugee camps.

If we are to stop children being recruited, or re-recruited, into armies it is vital that real alternatives are provided. It must be recognised that in a country where children may lack food, education and shelter joining the army may be their only means for survival. In policy terms this means that there must be a continuum between relief and long term development assistance.

The Mobilisation of Resources and the Political Will to deliver on Education

Since the Dakar Conference there has been little progress in moving from rhetoric into action. Indeed, Dakar has been defined by many NGO's, both North and South, as a failure of political will.

The G8 meeting in Okinawa last year confirmed its support for the Dakar commitments, but the IMF and World Bank Annual Spring meetings, in Prague in 2000, ignored education. The UNCTAD Conference on Least Developed Countries, in Brussels in May 2001, was another missed opportunity to take forward the Dakar commitments.

A Conference on Child Poverty that was held in London earlier this year agreed a Commonwealth Fund for Education.

At this year's IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings, Paul Martin, the Canadian Finance Minister, launched a powerful education initiative, and helped to secure an agreement from the Development Committee to discuss education at a future meeting. The World Bank and UNESCO also released a joint 'Dakar +1' Statement which acknowledged the need for more progress. UNICEF is expected to take a lead on education at the forthcoming UN Special Session on Children in September.

Critically, UNESCO has, however, warned that,

"A funding gap is likely to persist unless often stated rhetoric is followed by political will to adopt more radical measures than usually applied to ensure the attainment of the educational goals."

Currently, just \$800 million a year in bi-lateral and multi-lateral aid goes to basic education. According to the Global Education Campaign, for the targets on education to be achievable it would require closer to \$8 billion per year. This is equivalent to just 4 days of global military spending, or nine minutes of international currency speculation.

Even if all donors were to triple their support the total by 2015 would only be \$7 billion. This would of course totally miss the possibility of getting more girls into school by 2005.

If developing countries contributed half, the rich North would only be increasing their \$50 billion annual bill by a mere \$4 billion. Given the potential benefits, it is a small investment. Developing countries could raise substantial funds through cuts in military spending, and other unproductive expenditure, and the transfer of these resources to education.

The efforts of the British Chancellor and the Canadian Finance Minister this year have provided a powerful force within the G8 for progress towards a global financing framework for education. It is now critical that the next G8 meeting, in Genoa, 20-22 July 2001, gives its

strong support for such a framework. The aim should be to generate sufficient resources to deliver free and good quality primary education, to improve efforts to achieve progress in gender equality by 2005, and also to bring an early end to fees and cost-recovery.

UNESCO has now started to take more focused and decisive action on education, and has shown an increasing willingness to work with others rather than try to assume leadership. It is critical that the role of UNESCO's High Level Working Group on education, which is scheduled to meet on 29-30 October 2001 and will review post-Dakar progress, is well defined and includes senior political representatives.

In spite of the fact that the World Bank has recognised that education is the best investment that a country can make, the institution has made disappointing progress since Dakar. Little has been done to take forward efforts to develop an accelerated plan to provide finance and support for a group of developing countries that are keen to make progress on education. This is partly due to a lack of leadership within the Bank, a lack of institutional obligations and the lack of governments pushing forward the education agenda at the World Bank.

The World Bank should prioritise working with UNESCO to develop the shape of a global financing framework. Indeed, the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings in September 2001 offer a critical opportunity to agree in detail a global financing framework for education, with financing details and major pledges being built upon up to the G8 Summit in Ottawa in 2002.

The IMF has made major progress in respect of its rhetoric on poverty reduction, including social sector spending. Although the institution does not have a direct role to play on education, it does exert significant influence on a government's ability to allocate finance to education. The IMF has acknowledged that it will promote pro-poor budgeting and will support increased fiscal flexibility with regards to poverty reduction expenditure. However, it needs to become more pro-active on financing, and move from broad rhetoric to practice at country level. It could, for example, work with the World Bank to review its ambitious, but prudent fiscal framework to ensure that education goals could be achieved more quickly.

Many NGO's and donors support the proposal to link of countries' poverty reduction strategies to the international development goals.

In turn, many developing countries are making progress on the preparation of their national education action plans, but there remains a long way to go. Tanzania, for example, recently announced that it would aim to provide free primary education in response to strong public pressure, but the details as yet remain unclear.

The Global Campaign for Education, working with national education alliances, has called for improved national education action plans that seek to rapidly eliminate cost recovery in education, and which seek to promote access for girls.

Efforts by developing country governments will, of course, require resources and other support from donors and key institutions, such as UNICEF, who are, for example, providing a lead on girls education.

The 2002 deadline for the preparation of National Education Plans could provide a similar target date for the development of a global initiative to help support those Plans.

Progress on the development and implementation of national action plans needs to be carefully monitored. There needs to be more and better information, at both a national and international level, to allow for parents, teachers and wider civil society to get a clear view of progress towards the targets. The Southern African Consortium for the Measurement of Educational Quality offers a useful model for the development of capacity at regional and country levels. The European Commission needs to work with other donors to define and agree a set of core indicators, and will support UNESCO's Institute of Statistics.

Except in emergency situations, NGO's should not be alternative service providers.

There is an argument that the challenge is not finding the money, but rather finding developing world governments with the capacity to use financial support from abroad, towards implementing appropriate programmes. But children should not be punished because they do not have an effective government, and routes must, therefore, be found to ensure that opportunities are offered to all children.

Conclusion

Action by the international community to honour its commitments on primary education would be a critical first step towards restoring the credibility of multilateralism and international cooperation.

Meeting the target of universal primary education by 2015 looks difficult but is possible. The Dakar Framework for Action provides us with the sign posts for how to proceed. Again, we come down to the need for resources, but more importantly the need for the political will from Governments and their leaders North and South.

One thing is clear. The current inequities caused by the denial of the right to education to millions of children is both untenable and indefensible.

Annex 1

EU Follow up to Dakar

- Joint Statement by the Commission and the Council, of 10 November 2000.
- Cotonou Agreement, Article 25, on social sector development.
- Programming directives for the 9th EDF.
- Guidelines on the sectoral approach.

- Guidelines for education: future priorities.
- The Strategic Programming Cycle and Programming Cycle 2002 (December 2000) lists education as one of two priorities for development cooperation.