

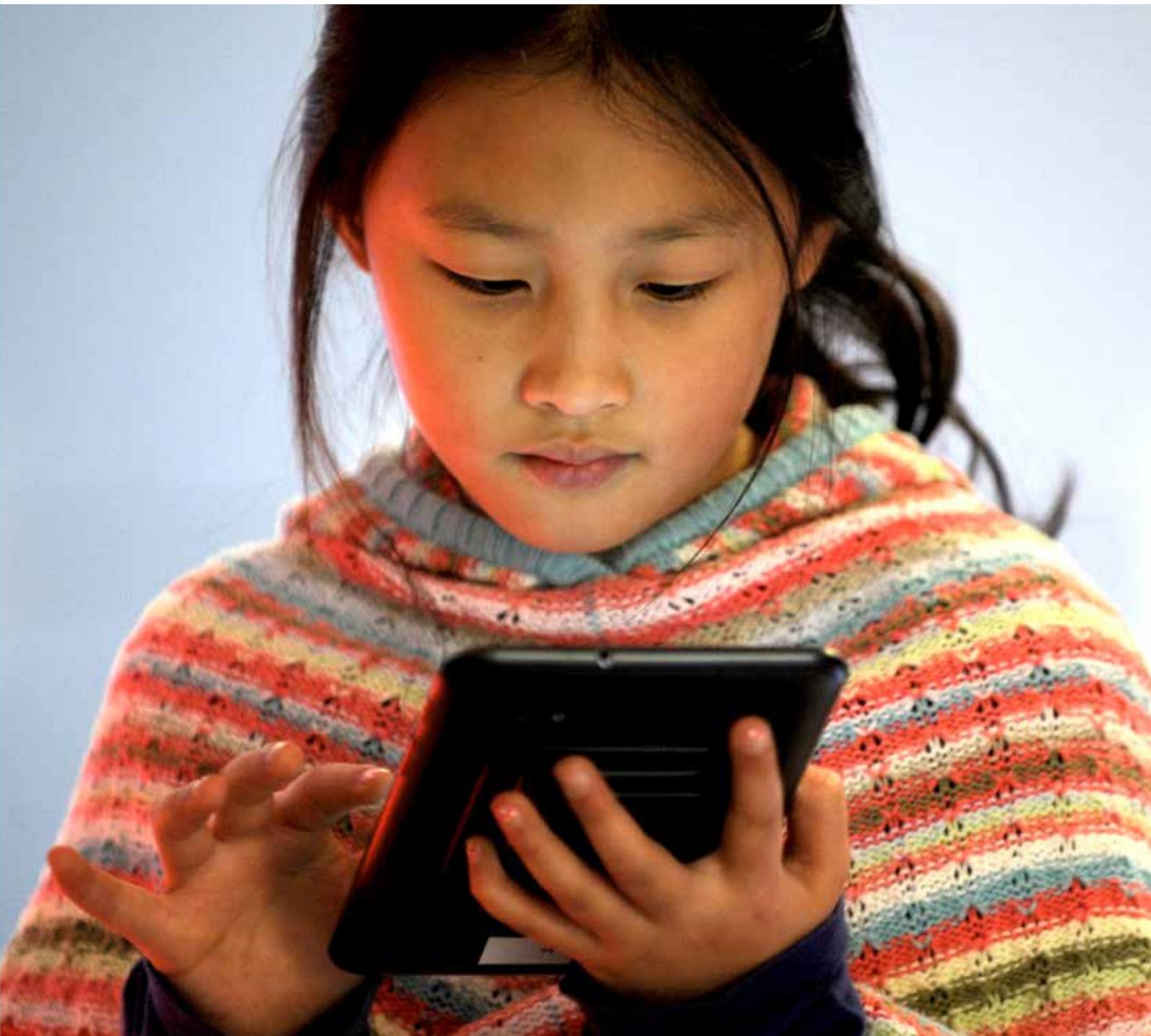


United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



World Education Forum 2015

FINAL REPORT



World Education Forum 2015

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Published in 2015 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,
7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

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Designed by UNESCO

Printed by UNESCO

Printed in France

ED-2015/ws/34

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Foreword

The World Education Forum that took place in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2015 will remain a historic milestone on more than one count.

Held four months before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations, the Forum, co-organized by UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women, affirmed that education is the most transformative force for building a better future for all children, young people and adults across the world.

This conviction brought together some 1,600 participants from 160 countries, including 120 Ministers of Education, the United Nations Secretary-General, the President of the Republic of Korea, heads of UN agencies, global education leaders and influential advocates from civil society, non-governmental organizations, donor agencies and the private sector.

Together, this dynamic and diverse international community rallied around a single and shared vision of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Building on the legacy of Jomtien (Thailand) and Dakar (Senegal) and reasserting that education is a fundamental human right and a public good, the Forum charted a new course that is tailored to our times of rapid change and that commits to ensuring all children, young people and adults are empowered with the knowledge and skills they need to live in dignity and contribute to their societies as responsible global citizens.

This report reflects the spirit of Incheon – one of rich debate, experience-sharing, innovation and partnership, expressed through a wide range of sessions, encompassing key themes that must be addressed to drive progress. By adopting the Incheon Declaration, ‘Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all’, Member States and the global community demonstrated their commitment to a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and inspirational, leaving no one behind. The goal is to realise everyone’s right to education as a fundamental dimension of human, social and economic development.

Evidence shows there is no stronger, no more lasting, investment a country can make than educating its citizens. Education is the path to sustainability – to poverty alleviation, better health, environmental protection and gender equality. Every effort must be made to guarantee that the goal and targets are reached. The Education 2030 Framework for Action shows the way to implement, coordinate, finance and monitor the goal, in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

We must all act upon it now, and together.



Irina Bokova
Director-General of UNESCO

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all our Member States whose strong participation, with some 120 ministers among 1,600 participants attending to share views and ideas during three days, made the World Education Forum 2015 a milestone moment for global education in the last fifteen years. The level of support that the World Education Forum received clearly demonstrated the governments' resolve in taking forward the new education agenda.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the Government of the Republic of Korea in particular, for its generous support in hosting the event.

The scope and influence of the World Education Forum 2015 has been all-encompassing thanks to the co-convenors' joint efforts in organizing the event and committing to support the implementation of the Education 2030 agenda. UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR and the World Bank all came together to provide strategic and technical contributions over the past two years and during the Forum itself.

UNESCO's Education Sector, including colleagues from Headquarters, Regional Bureaux, Institutes and Field Offices, was fully mobilized for this remarkable event. Their deep commitment and hard work contributed to making the World Education Forum 2015 a success.

Finally, I would like to thank civil society, numerous intergovernmental organisations, the private sector, academia and all other World Education Forum 2015 participants whose active involvement was instrumental in making it a decisive, historic and far-reaching event.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Qian Tang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Qian Tang, Ph.D.
Assistant Director-General for Education

Introduction

This summary report is based on the proceedings of the World Education Forum organized at Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 19 to 22 May 2015.

Conveners and participants

Convened by UNESCO, jointly with UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR and the World Bank and hosted by the Government of Korea, the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 brought together some 1,600 participants including 120 Ministers of Education from 160 countries, UN agencies, international donor agencies, and Non-Governmental Organizations (see List of participants in Appendix 1).

Format

The forum was a unique and historic opportunity to debate, share experiences, as well as showcase new ideas and innovative strategies on a range of themes and issues. This was done through a combination of four plenary sessions, six thematic debates, twenty parallel group sessions and some eighteen lunchtime side events (see Programme in Appendix 2).

Opening session

The World Education Forum was opened by a series of prestigious speakers including Ms Park Geun-hye, President of the Republic of Korea, Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank, Mr Anthony Lake, Executive Director of UNICEF, Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, HH Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, and Mr Kailash Satyarthi, Laureate of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize.

2015 NGO Forum

The Forum itself was preceded by the 2015 NGO Forum (18-19 May 2015) which provided space for NGOs to meet among themselves and to agree on a collective civil society vision for education post-2015 as well as to reflect on strategies for civil society engagement in the processes needed to finalize and implement the post-2015 education agenda¹. Participants at the NGO Forum included 238 accredited representatives of 149 national, regional and international non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations from all regions of the world, most of whom are members of UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO/EFA), as well as 45 observers. Special efforts were made to ensure representation of youth perspectives from across the spectrum of the Education for All (EFA) agenda.

Organization of the report

The first section of this report briefly sets the stage for the Forum at which the international education community adopted the Incheon Declaration 'Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all'. The following section provides an overview of some of the educational trends that constitute the backdrop to the WEF 2015 deliberations and the shaping of Education 2030. The third section provides a summary of thematic issues and recommendations arising from the multiple debates and discussions at the Forum. The last section outlines some of the main challenges relative to the implementation of the new ambitious universal education agenda for 2030. Highlights from the various debates, sessions and side events are included in boxes to further illustrate the analysis presented in the report.

¹ See 2015 NGO Forum for the list of objectives, expected outcomes and Final Declaration.

1 Reframing the global education agenda for 2030

Background

The World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 was a historic opportunity to reframe the global education agenda as the international community defined the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030. The global education agenda 2000-2015 was developed in reference to both the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All (EFA) frameworks. In April 2000, the participants at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, adopted the Dakar Framework for Action 'Education for All: Meeting our collective commitment'. The Dakar Framework reaffirmed the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All adopted ten years earlier in 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand. It committed to meeting the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015 through six goals ranging from improving early childhood care and education and universalizing primary education, to reducing adult illiteracy, ensuring gender equality in education and improving the quality of education. In September 2000, world leaders came together at the United Nations in New York to adopt the UN Millennium Declaration, committing to reducing poverty and setting out a series of targets that became known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Inspired by the EFA goals, the MDGs included two targets related to universal primary education and to gender equality in education. Building on this heritage, WEF 2015 was a unique occasion to reshape the global education agenda within the comprehensive framework of the SDGs being defined for 2030.

Sustainable development starts with education

Education is central to sustainable development and constitutes the pathway to a life of dignity for all. This was clearly reaffirmed during the WEF 2015 plenary session that examined the contribution of education to sustainable development.² Sustainable development, it was argued, cannot be achieved

by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone. Achieving sustainable development is only truly possible through cross-sectoral efforts that begin with education – not any type of education, but one that addresses the interdependence of environment, economy and society, and helps bring about the fundamental change of mindsets needed to trigger action for sustainable development. Recognizing the important role of education, the proposed SDGs reflect education both as a stand-alone goal *and* as education-related targets under other SDGs. It was argued that since education has the potential to accelerate progress towards the achievement of *all* of the SDGs, it should be part of the strategies to achieve *each* of them. This is particularly true with regard to poverty reduction, health, and climate change. Indeed, education equips people with the competencies to increase their income and escape poverty (SDG 1). Educated people are better informed and able to access, understand and apply information about health, which helps to reduce diseases and contributes to better health outcomes (SDG 3). Education increases environmental awareness and concern, and equips people with the skills and values to change behaviour and find solutions to environmental challenges (SDGs 12-15). Participants at WEF 2015 called upon the international community to make the most of the full potential of education as a catalyst for sustainable development.

The Incheon Declaration

Building on an assessment of the experience in realizing the goals and targets set out in the EFA and MDG frameworks adopted in 2000, the WEF confirmed the contours of the proposed future education agenda. This new agenda is outlined in the Incheon Declaration 'Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all' adopted at the conference (see text of the Incheon Declaration in Appendix 3). It reaffirms and supports SDG 4 on education to: 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. The proposed education-related SDG and its constituent

² Plenary Session III: How does education contribute to sustainable development post-2015

targets are further detailed in the draft Education 2030 Framework for Action. This framework also addresses gaps in the proposed SDG targets on education. Moreover, it proposes indicative strategy options for each target to support implementation. It further suggests coordinating, financing and monitoring processes and mechanisms. The Incheon Declaration is a progressive agenda for a universally-relevant global education for 2030 which builds on gains made and proposes more ambitious targets while recognizing persistent challenges in equitable access to quality basic education.

Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs. We commit with a sense of urgency to a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no one behind. This new vision is fully captured by the proposed SDG 4 *'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'* and its corresponding targets. It is transformative and universal, attends to the 'unfinished business' of the EFA agenda and the education-related MDGs, and addresses global and national education challenges.

Incheon Declaration, Article 5

The Declaration represents a collective commitment of the education community to implement the Education 2030 agenda. It inspires bold and innovative action. The Declaration also entrusts UNESCO to continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate the 2030 education agenda.

Foundational Principles

The 2015 Incheon Declaration and the proposed Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education for 2030 are grounded in long-established foundational principles. First and foremost among these is **education as a fundamental human right** enabling the realization of all other economic, social and cultural rights. The Incheon Declaration reaffirms 'the vision and political will reflected in numerous international and regional human rights treaties that stipulate the right to education and its interrelation with other human rights.'³ This is particularly true for basic education which must be seen as the

building block for further learning, professional and vocational skills development and work, as well as for social, civic and political participation in a lifelong perspective.

The vision of Education 2030 also reaffirms that **education is a public good**. This implies that the state is the main duty bearer in protecting and fulfilling the right to education. It also stresses the collective dimension of education as a shared societal endeavour, implying an inclusive and participatory process of public policy formulation and implementation, with shared responsibility and commitment to solidarity at the local and global levels. Reaffirming this principle in the context of the multiplication and diversification of non-state actor involvement at all levels of education, it is essential to strengthen the role of the state in the regulation of educational processes and the protection of the fundamental right to education for all.

In short, the Education 2030 agenda:

...is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability. We reaffirm that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development.

Incheon Declaration, Article 5

³ Incheon Declaration, Article 2.

2 Trends shaping Education 2030

Confirming the proposed contours of the Education 2030 agenda, the debates at WEF were informed by a review of progress made and lessons learned from monitoring international educational development over the past fifteen years at both global and national levels. The deliberations were also situated against the backdrop of persistent and emerging trends in education.

Spectacular expansion of formal education at all levels

Across the world, there has been a remarkable and unprecedented expansion in access to education at all levels. Many Ministers shared the progress made in their countries during Plenary Session I and gave inspiring examples of national action. Globally, enrolment in pre-primary education has increased by nearly two-thirds since the turn of the century. The global net enrolment in primary school has risen to over 90 per cent, with spectacular progress in some countries. Improvements in net primary enrolments have reduced the number of out-of-school children and adolescents by almost half since 2000. Access to secondary education has also expanded over the past decade, with enrolment rising to almost 45 per cent in low-income countries, and to close to 75 per cent in middle-income countries. Globally, illiteracy rates fell by close to 25 per cent, and progress has been particularly notable among the age cohort that benefited from increased access to schooling. Global enrolment in higher education has doubled since 2000 with some 200 million students worldwide today, half of whom are women. Finally, there has been significant progress in narrowing the gender gap in education in the world since 2000, with a larger share of girls and women accessing different levels of formal education.

Experience since 2000 shows what can be done and there is much to celebrate. Significant progress has been made in ensuring the right to basic education, driven in part by the EFA and MDG frameworks. This progress has inspired the more ambitious targets proposed for the 2030 Education agenda that now aim to ensure pre-primary, primary

and secondary education for all and are reflected in the Incheon Declaration, which states that:

Motivated by our significant achievements in expanding access to education over the last 15 years, we will ensure the provision of 12 years of free, publicly funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes. We also encourage the provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education and that all children have access to quality early childhood development, care and education.

Incheon Declaration, Article 6

Addressing the unfinished EFA agenda and the persistent global 'learning crisis'

However, despite this formidable expansion of access to formal education, the assessment of progress and achievements since 2000 provided by National EFA Reviews and the Global EFA Monitoring Report 2015 clearly indicate the large extent to which we have collectively failed to reach EFA goals or even the much narrower goal of universalizing primary education. Indeed, some 58 million children and 70 million adolescents worldwide are out of school, and an estimated 100 million children, or one in six children in low- and middle-income countries, drop out before completing primary education.

Moreover, education of poor quality all too often leads to insufficient levels of basic skills acquisition, even for those in school. Millions of children still leave school without basic skills. It is estimated that 130 million children are still not able to read, write or count adequately, even after at least four years in school. Finally, some 757 million adults, nearly two-thirds of whom are women, lack the literacy skills that would allow them to participate fully in twenty-first century society. The progressive acknowledgement of the alarming scale of the quality deficit in the global 'learning crisis' has

shifted the global conversation from a traditional focus on access to greater concern for the learning actually taking place.

Furthermore, inequality in education has also increased, with the poorest and most disadvantaged least likely to attend school and, when they do, to complete the primary cycle and acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. Persistent and widening inequalities in access to basic education and learning outcomes remain both across and within countries – indeed, national averages in many countries mask striking inequalities in levels of educational attainment and outcomes. Traditional factors of marginalization in education, such as gender and urban/rural residence, continue to combine with income, socio-economic background, language, ethnicity, HIV and AIDS, age – particularly in the case of adolescent girls – and disability, to create ‘mutually reinforcing disadvantages’, particularly in low-income and conflict-affected countries.

As summed up by the comprehensive assessment of country progress towards the six EFA goals provided by the 2015 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) *Education for All 2000–2015: Achievements and Challenges*:

Overall, not even the target of universal primary education was reached, let alone the more ambitious EFA goals, and the most disadvantaged continued to be the last to benefit. But there have been achievements that should not be underestimated. The world will have advanced by 2015 beyond where it would have been if the trends of the 1990s had continued.

Bearing in mind these persistent patterns of inequality and exclusion, the most marginalized, disadvantaged and hardest to reach groups must be the priority focus of the Education 2030 agenda. This must necessarily include special attention for conflict-affected zones where a very high and growing proportion of out-of-school children and youth are living. But it also entails a concern for working children, learners with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Realizing our collective commitment to ‘meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults’ is a necessary precondition for sustainable human and social development in the twenty-first century.

This concern with inclusion and equity is clearly reflected in the Incheon Declaration which states:

Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and

we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Incheon Declaration, Article 7

Addressing the unfinished EFA agenda

- ➡ Great progress has been made since 2000, but we did not reach the Education for All goal. Only a third of countries have achieved all of the measurable EFA goals. Only just over half of countries reached universal primary enrolment.
- ➡ Both primary and lower secondary levels should be compulsory, with one pre-primary year. Realistic and sustainable financing mechanisms need to be developed to help meet costs.
- ➡ Policy-makers should identify skill levels to be acquired at each stage of education.
- ➡ Governments should ensure sufficient and language appropriate learning materials. A move should be made towards a learner-centred pedagogy and improved multi-lingual language policies.
- ➡ The quality, rigor and use of appropriate learning assessments should be enhanced.
- ➡ Measures to fill the trained teacher gap should be adopted.

Source: Highlights from ‘Setting the stage’ High-level panel debate, Tuesday 19 May 2015

Growing concern for competencies for work, life and citizenship

A central function of education is to foster the skills and competencies that will enable learners to support themselves and their families, and contribute to the sustainable economic development of the communities in which they live. Decent work and entrepreneurship can be ensured through properly-designed and organized education, including technical and vocational education and training that prepares learners for the labour markets of tomorrow.

We recognize education as key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication.

Incheon Declaration, Article 5

In a time of rapid technological development, demographic shifts and high unemployment, a narrow focus on job-specific skills reduces graduates' abilities to adapt to the fast-changing demands of employers. Greater emphasis must therefore be placed on developing – and recognizing through validation and accreditation mechanisms – transferable and soft skills that can be used across a range of occupational fields and promote learners' capacities to regularly update them through lifelong learning. The Education 2030 agenda also underlines the need to create more effective partnerships between education and training providers, employers and labour unions, in order to ensure that learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings is not isolated from the realities of the workplace.

In addition to ensuring effective acquisition of foundational and vocational skills, there is growing attention being paid to the relevance of learning when faced with the contemporary challenges of sustainable human and social development. Education must be both adaptive and transformative. For this to be the case there must be heightened attention paid to the relevance of curriculum content and methods. Learning must foster the critical competencies required for responsible and active citizenship. Enabling individuals and communities to adequately address contemporary challenges and establish the conditions for a better future for all must be an essential aim of education. This renewed attention to the purpose and relevance of learning for sustainable human and social development is one of the defining features of the 2030 Education agenda. It is reflected in the proposed target that aims to ensure that all learners acquire the competencies needed to promote sustainable human and social development through an understanding of and a sensitization to such issues as sustainable lifestyles, human rights and social justice, as well as identity in a plural and interconnected world.

Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values

and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED). In this regard, we strongly support the implementation of the Global Action Programme on ESD launched at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya in 2014. We also stress the importance of human rights education and training in order to achieve the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Incheon Declaration, Article 9

Competencies for work, life and citizenship

- ➡ Skills for work have to be job-oriented, therefore a tripartite involvement of government, employers and employees organisations needs to be considered.¹
- ➡ Work-based learning is considered to be an important driver for improving skill-relevance to the labour market, attracting learners and reducing costs. Areas of policy action should include certification and recognition of work-based learning, career guidance and counselling or strengthening the school-to-work transition.¹
- ➡ Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) are a crucial new transformative element in the global education agenda. They go beyond issues related to access to education and make education relevant today in light of global challenges.²

Sources:

- 1 Highlights from 'Skills for work and entrepreneurship' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015
- 2 Highlights from 'Educating and learning for peaceful and sustainable societies' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Growing recognition of the need for flexible lifelong learning systems

Technological development, the spectacular growth in internet connectivity and mobile penetration, and the expansion of the cyber world is radically transforming the methods, content and spaces of learning. The internet has transformed how people access information and knowledge, how they interact, and how they engage in social, civic and economic activities. The increased availability

of, and access to, diverse sources of knowledge are expanding opportunities for learning, which may be less structured and more innovative. This transformation of the educational landscape has led to a growing recognition of the importance and relevance of learning taking place outside formal institutions. What we need is a more fluid approach to learning as a continuum. The diversity of learning settings and the blurring of boundaries between formal and non-formal education favour the idea of a network of learning spaces. Non-formal and informal learning spaces must better interact with and complement formal education and training institutions from early childhood throughout life. In order to operationalize open and flexible lifelong learning systems, we need effective systems for the recognition, validation and assessment of competencies acquired, regardless of the formal, non-formal or informal pathways through which they were acquired.

It is in this spirit that the proposed education goal 2030 is framed in terms of *lifelong learning for all*. Furthermore, the Incheon Declaration highlights the importance of lifelong learning opportunities:

We commit to promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education. This includes equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and higher education and research, with due attention to quality assurance. In addition, the provision of flexible learning pathways, as well as the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education, is important. We further commit to ensuring that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire life skills, and that they are provided with adult learning, education and training opportunities. We are also committed to strengthening science, technology and innovation.

Incheon Declaration, Article 10

Flexible lifelong learning systems

- ➔ Key elements for developing sustainable policies include high quality initial and lifelong learning; making learning everybody's business; effective links between learning and work; enabling workers to adapt learning to their lives; improving transparency; guiding and helping employers to make better use of workers' skills.

Source: Highlights from 'Expanding the vision: youth and adult literacy within a lifelong learning perspective' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Increasing pressures on public financing

The expansion of access to basic schooling over the past decade has led to a growing demand for secondary and tertiary education as well as for technical and vocational education and training. This growing demand has placed increasing pressure on public financing available for education. There is a consequent need to ensure more efficient use of limited resources and to promote greater accountability in the investment of public resources for education. Moreover, it is necessary to seek ways in which to supplement public education budgets through greater fiscal capacity, new partnerships with non-state actors, as well as through advocacy for increased official development assistance. The global Education 2030 agenda being proposed – with its ambition to expand access to quality education and training at all levels – will require higher levels of more secure and better-targeted funding. This will be a major challenge as many governments, particularly in low- and lower middle-income countries, are unlikely to be able to increase their public education budgets to the required levels. If we want to bridge this resource gap, things will have to be done differently. Developing effective systems of governance, performance monitoring and accountability involving multiple stakeholders at different levels can support a more transparent and rational allocation of resources and relieve the pressure on public education funding.

The diversification of non-state engagement in education

While the state plays a central role in the provision of education, the scale of engagement of non-state actors at all levels of education is growing and becoming more diversified. This is partly the result of growing demand for voice, participation and accountability in public affairs. But it is also in response to the need to relieve pressure on

public financing given the spectacular expansion of access to all levels of formal education witnessed worldwide over the past two decades. In addition, the dynamics of international cooperation have significantly changed in the past decade with a multiplication and diversification of development partners and a proliferation of non-governmental organizations, foundations, philanthropists and multilateral aid agencies and funds, as well as emerging donors introducing new patterns of South-South and triangular cooperation. The diversification of stakeholders in education at both national and global levels presents new challenges for the state in the coordination of partnerships within and across sectors, in the monitoring of education as a shared responsibility and in the regulation of education as a public good.

Diversification of non-state engagement in education

- ➡ There have been significant changes in partnership in the education sector not only in terms of financing but also in relation to producing education outcomes.¹
- ➡ Brazil is an example of South-South cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries. Among others, Brazil provides technical cooperation to Cape Verde in the field of teacher education for students with visual and hearing disability.¹
- ➡ More policy attention should be given to diversifying sources of funding, improving its efficiency and increasing accountability. Involving the private sector in funding, governance and management of training funds constitutes a first step. TVET institutions should be enabled to generate revenues and diversify services to meet the needs of different target groups, enterprises and communities.²
- ➡ Civil society organizations have the proven capacity to help broaden public awareness, initiate and undertake critical policy dialogue and evidence-based advocacy interventions, promote more transparent decision-making processes and undertake innovative education approaches, especially to reach the most marginalized groups.³

Sources:

- 1 Highlights from 'Beyond aid: Transforming education systems through partnership' parallel session, Thursday 21 May 2015
- 2 Highlights from 'Skills for work and entrepreneurship' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015
- 3 Highlights from 'The role of civil society in education' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May

3 Thematic issues and recommendations

The World Education Forum 2015 provided a unique opportunity for global debate, sharing of knowledge, and showcased new ideas and innovative strategies on a range of themes and issues. This was achieved through a combination of four plenary sessions, six thematic debates, twenty parallel group sessions and some eighteen lunchtime side events (see Programme in Appendix 2). This section outlines the key ideas and recommendations from these various sessions.

Improving the quality of education

Quality in education is a multi-dimensional and evolving concept that must be customized to local expectations and need. As such, there is no point in time when quality can be described as having been 'achieved'. Evolving definitions of quality must be both respectful of local and national circumstances, contexts and languages, and forward-looking in preparing for the world of tomorrow. Quality education must contribute to the personal fulfilment and happiness of learners as well as to individual and societal well-being. Quality education must be understood from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders – citizens, learners, teachers, parents and community. It is critical to engage in, and sustain, dialogue among the multiple stakeholders on the essential knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies required for success in life and society. Most importantly, the voices of learners and teachers must be heard and must inform policy dialogue on the quality of education.

In order to have a systemic vision of quality, it was argued we need a comprehensive understanding of assessment in education. Quality education should not be narrowly defined by those learning outcomes that are most easily measured. The complexity of the notion of quality in education systems cannot be captured through any single assessment tool. It is nevertheless true that learning assessments can play an important role in supporting the quest for improved quality of education, on condition that they are well designed to meet the expected outcomes of education at specific levels of the system and taking into account the context for learners. Emphasis should

be placed on continuous and formative assessments. Teachers must be clear about the purpose of such assessments so as to analyse and interpret the results in order to support learners' progress.

Education quality

- Overcoming the 'learning crisis' and rising to the scale of the challenge of ensuring equitable quality primary and secondary education for all by 2030 requires mobilization of both knowledge and financial resources.¹
- We need a system-wide approach – there is no 'silver bullet'. We need to assess the system performance in order to inform policy interventions in areas such as teacher preparation, curriculum, examinations, etc. Measuring learning outcomes is an essential component for the management and strengthening of education systems. This requires clearly defined minimum learning standards in order to monitor the results of educational processes.¹
- Quality is a global movement, a state of being and a socially determined concept that should be facilitated by inter-cultural sharing and dialogue. The concept of quality is progressive, temporal and continuously evolving with time and environment.²
- Education must be 'fit for purpose' and customized to the national/local contexts. A systemic and holistic approach to educational reforms should be based on a series of core pillars: inclusion, equity and resources efficiency.²

Sources:

1 Highlights from 'Quality primary and secondary education – An increased focus on learning' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

2 Highlights from 'Placing quality education at the centre of lifelong learning' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

The centrality of curriculum for improved quality and enhanced relevance of education

Curriculum should play a crucial role in the 2030 Education Agenda as a transformative force which steers learning processes and as an operational mechanism giving effect to national development aspirations and efforts. The curriculum must be part of the conversation about forging a systemic vision of quality education and the education system. The core functions of education and relevant curriculum issues are not necessarily captured by international standard exams. Curriculum-related issues should be central in national education and development policy dialogue. No curriculum change is possible without teacher engagement and professional development. There must also be a more productive interaction between curriculum development and assessment. Bearing in mind that the curriculum is a contested space involving a diversity of stakeholders, bringing in and responding to learners' perspectives and voices is of the highest priority. The curriculum should serve as the conduit to an equitable and truly inclusive society that celebrates diversity. It should facilitate equity and ensure personalized learning opportunities and experiences and be flexible to facilitate life-long learning.

Teachers for the future we want

The proposed education 2030 target on teachers is framed as a means of implementation with a focus on increasing the supply of qualified teachers. While recognizing the magnitude of the global teacher shortage, such a target will not suffice to meet the quality challenge. It is imperative that governments ensure the development and implementation of inclusive and equitable policies and strategies accompanied with adequate resources, in consultation with other stakeholders, especially teachers and teacher organizations. Moreover, teacher organizations should continuously engage in policy dialogue with governments, with a view to improving the working conditions, welfare and professional status of teachers. Social dialogue must be institutionalized and guaranteed through legislation. In addition, teachers at all levels and in all types of education should be empowered through continuous professional development, including the appropriate use of technology, peer learning/evaluation and clear career paths that bring financial and intellectual incentives, social recognition and professional autonomy. Teachers in conflict and emergency situations should be given particular attention and support with regards to their personal, psychosocial and professional needs. Finally, the

international community should provide technical and financial support as well as knowledge sharing opportunities to teacher stakeholders, including policy-makers, practitioners, teacher organizations and teachers, to ensure quality learning for all.

Transforming learning and teaching through technology

Around the world, digital technologies are demonstrating their ability to empower educators in their mission of developing the next generation of lifelong learners, innovators, and responsible citizens in a globalized world. With an effective technology foundation and the right support, teachers can gain powerful tools to deepen, accelerate, and enhance student learning. Students can research, create, communicate, and collaborate in ways that better prepare them for the world, the workforce, or higher education. School systems can base critical planning decisions on a deep, evidence-based understanding of how to improve learning and teaching. Achieving the promise of technology, however, requires more than simply deploying devices. If initiatives focus too much on technology and not enough on usages that truly improve learning and teaching, the results will be disappointing. It is important to emphasize the need for a holistic model that starts from a vision of student success and addresses the broad range of elements needed to produce transformative change.

Transforming learning and teaching through technology

- In the forthcoming years, technology will remain one of the most valuable sources of inspiration for innovation in education, but to fully exploit current and emerging opportunities, governments will need to empower teachers with sound pedagogical capacities and make sure that devices, contents and connectivity follow their needs.
- A pedagogy driven approach should be prioritized. Technology-supported innovations can only become relevant, meaningful and sustainable if they provide efficient and convenient solutions to real education needs.

Source: Highlights from 'Innovating through technology: Shaping the future of education' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Professional and vocational skills development

There is a need to overcome policy fragmentation and ensure that skills development policies are fully integrated within social, economic and environmental sustainability policies. A whole government approach to skills development policies is required which involves social partners. Skills for work have to be labour-oriented and consider tripartite involvement of government, employers and employees organizations. It is also essential to improve the image and attractiveness of technical and vocational education and training. Indeed, in many countries we observe a perception of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as the least attractive education and training route. Education and training policies should reaffirm the pivotal role of TVET and act to raise its profile, its attractiveness and improve social perception. Qualifications Frameworks, articulations with tertiary education and better linkages with the world of work are important measures to improve attractiveness. Moreover, there is a need to increase and diversify funding of TVET. More policy attention should be given to diversifying sources of funding, improving efficiency of use of funding and increasing accountability. The first step towards this is to involve the private sector in funding, governance and management of training funds and other funding schemes. Beyond this, TVET institutions should be enabled to generate revenues and diversify services to different target groups, enterprises and communities. Finally, it is important to encourage work-based learning which is considered an important driver of improving relevance to the labour market, to attract learners and reduce costs. Areas for policy action include certifying and recognizing work-based learning, career guidance and counselling, and strengthening the school-to-work transition.

Early childhood care and education as a critical foundation for lifelong learning

Learning begins at birth. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is the first and the most critical stage of lifelong learning and development because it is a period of rapid brain development and functioning. The cost of inaction during early childhood is high: fixing problems later is more expensive and less efficient. As such, ECCE should be the first of the ten targets of the global education and lifelong learning goal for 2030. In addition to investing early, countries must prioritize and target ECCE interventions towards the most marginalized and disadvantaged children, in order to turn the vicious cycle of disadvantage into a virtuous cycle of opportunities. ECCE is the

great equalizer affording every child a fair start to life. Moreover, experience has demonstrated that strong government commitment and investment can successfully implement integrated ECCE programmes at scale. In doing so, it is essential to invest in, and monitor, both access to such services and children's learning and development outcomes at individual and system levels. The concept of 'school readiness' associated with ECCE programmes has two sets of implications. First of all, it implies that children are ready for school in terms of physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and linguistic development. Beyond preparing children to participate and succeed in school, 'school readiness' also implies that families, schools and communities are prepared and supported to meet the diverse development and learning needs of young children.

Early Childhood Care and Education

- ⇒ **Integrated ECCE programmes are successfully implemented in growing economies through strong government commitment and investment. Examples from South Africa and China demonstrated feasibility of ECCE programmes at scale.**
- ⇒ **Invest for results: It is essential to invest in, and monitor, not only access to ECCE services but also children's learning and development outcomes at individual and system levels.**

Source: Highlights from 'Early Childhood Care and Education: A critical investment for lifelong learning and development' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Youth and adult literacy

Literacy is about political, economic and social empowerment, the effective exercise of human rights and laying foundations for sustainable, inclusive and fair development. Despite these rationales, literacy has long been neglected in the international educational agenda and has been a weak link in the EFA movement, reflecting insufficient global, national and local political commitment. This neglect within the broader international education and development agenda also has to do with factors such as the lack of effective coordination mechanisms at local level, insufficient attention to mother-tongue literacy in programme design, and weak adaptation of programmes to changing life conditions. Literacy must now be seen as an enabler and facilitator of the 17 SDGs. In order to make the case for literacy, reliable data and evidence on impact are key to justifying greater political

commitment and higher levels of investment. The development and measurement of information processing and problem-solving skills that may support and strengthen labour productivity should be a central feature of effective mobilization strategies. Finally, participants noted that while the growing generational gap in average literacy skill levels reflects progress in access to basic education, it also leaves older generations in a more vulnerable situation that requires focused attention.

Literacy within a lifelong learning perspective

- Learning can be promoted and become effective through diverse environments, pathways and settings, therefore the recognition of diverse ways of learning and their mainstreaming in the education system are crucial to strengthen literacy programmes, policies and strategies.

Source: Highlights from 'Expanding the vision: youth and adult literacy within a lifelong learning perspective' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Higher Education

Participants at WEF argued that access to quality higher education for all is a crucial component of a transformative global education and development agenda. They further argued that there can be no international division of labour in education and that quality higher education must be accessible to all and in all countries. A strong higher education community is important not only for its role in the preparation of a skilled workforce and the creation of knowledge, but also for its key role in strengthening quality education through teacher education. At the same time, participants acknowledged that current societal transformation calls for the structure and role of the university in society to be reinvented. While online and distance education is crucial to expanding access and enhancing equity in higher education, the retention of students and employability of graduates will need to be revisited. It was suggested that the development of a global convention for the recognition of qualifications in higher education may be necessary in the climate of increased human mobility, and would help to strengthen access to higher education for refugees and displaced people.

New trends in Higher Education

- The internationalization of learning and research, and in particular student and academic mobility, requires particular attention to be paid to quality assurance and the cross-border recognition of qualifications.
- A global trend to note in the Higher Education sector is the diversification, in terms of providers, delivery modalities and funding sources.
- Greater attention is being paid to the employability of Higher Education graduates, and in particular youth. In addition to facilitating smooth transition from Higher Education to employment, the challenge is to foster skills that will enable graduates to participate actively in the labour market throughout their working lives.

Source: Highlights from 'Higher education – Preparing youth and adults for work and lifelong learning' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Ensuring equity and gender equality

Gender equality in education has often been reduced to gender parity in participation. The concept needs to be understood in a much broader sense and embedded in wider social, cultural and political realities. Education can be an equalizer and the sole mechanism that can contribute to halting the cycle of discrimination and inequality in wider society. There exists sufficient evidence on how best to address inequity in education. However, as education systems reflect wider societal power relations, education can only be an equalizer if there is political will and a deliberate attempt to address inequality. Doing so requires an integrated approach since inequities are not isolated phenomenon, but rather, intricately interrelated. Gender discrimination, in particular, intersects with poverty, ethnic and linguistic differences, disability and traditional attitudes. These combined factors of discrimination undermine the ability to exercise the right to education. The multiple aspects of inequity/discrimination therefore need to be addressed together. This integrated approach is necessary from local situation analysis to policy development, implementation and monitoring. Otherwise, it is the symptoms only that are being addressed. Addressing inequity and marginalized groups through education has to be institutionalized – it cannot be a matter of specific initiatives or projects. Teachers are a key to the solution.

Ensuring equity and gender equality in education

- ➡ Access is not enough – An increase in girls' enrolment is not equality in education.
- ➡ Need for an integrated approach – Like communities, teachers have to be involved in the development and implementation of education policies, curriculum, etc.

Source: Highlights from 'Ensuring equity and gender equality in education and training: perspectives from vulnerable populations' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Education for peace and sustainable societies

There is an urgent need to build peaceful and sustainable societies and to effect fundamental changes in how we coexist with each other and our planet. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) are crucial to this effort and represent a new transformative element in the global education agenda. They reflect a paradigm shift which goes beyond issues of access to ensure that learning content and methods are relevant in view of addressing global challenges. Such education must necessarily promote critical thinking that can challenge the status quo through action and engagement with the real world. While formal education holds great potential to reach all learners, education for the promotion of peace and sustainable societies cannot be confined to school environments alone. Learning in schools, in families and in the community has to be connected. In all learning settings, ICTs have great potential to strengthen education for peace and sustainable development, not only because they are conducive to the learner-centred pedagogies they promote, but also because they can open up classrooms to the world and facilitate global dialogue.

Education for peace and sustainable societies

- ➡ ESD and GCED are about real-life action and engagement with the real world. They cannot be limited to the sole school environment since this type of learning takes place in schools, families and in the community. For this reason, multi-stakeholder cooperation plays a crucial role in the implementation of ESD and GCED.

Sources: Highlights from 'Educating and learning for peaceful and sustainable societies' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Education and health

There is a growing understanding of the interactions between education and health, as healthy learners learn better and better educated learners have the skills to be healthy. Education is one of the most powerful ways of improving people's health, a fact which was strongly affirmed during WEF 2015. It saves the lives of millions of people, especially mothers and children, helps prevent and contain disease, and is an essential element of efforts to reduce malnutrition. Educated people are better informed about diseases, take preventative measures, recognize signs of illness early and tend to use health care services more often.⁴ One of the main aims of education is to enable individuals to reach their full potential, and health is an essential pre-requisite of this. However, WEF delegates were reminded that an estimated 200 to 500 million school days⁵ are lost to ill-health every year in low income countries. A number of preventable health conditions impact on education, for example malaria and worm infections can reduce enrolment and increase absenteeism, and hunger and anaemia can affect cognition and learning.⁶ In addition to the physical impact of health conditions, a number of conditions are accompanied by psychosocial pressures (e.g. those experienced during puberty) which can lead to increases in anxiety and depression, in turn affecting education and leading to disengagement of learners. One of the targets of the proposed SDG 3 calls to 'ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes'.

Comprehensive sexuality education

A safe transition to adulthood requires knowledge and skills about sexuality, health and rights. All young people have the right to education about their health: this should be relevant to their lives, help them prepare for puberty and protect them from HIV and unintended pregnancy. In some regions of the world, only 40 per cent of young people have adequate knowledge about HIV, and one in five young women have started having children by the age of

4 UNESCO (2014): EFA Global Monitoring Report. Teaching and Learning: Achieving quality for all. Paris, UNESCO.

5 Bundy, D. (2011): Rethinking school health: a key component of education for all. Washington D.C., The World Bank.

6 SABER Working Paper Series. Number 3 (2012): What Matters most for School Health and School Feeding: A Framework Paper. DC, The World Bank.

17.⁷ Effective life-skills based sexuality education that includes cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and risk assessment; social skills, such as communication; and emotional skills, such as empathy, can help prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, and contribute towards gender equality, economic opportunities and sustainable development. Country presentations shared during WEF sessions underscored the fact that the ability to make healthy choices is not only dependent on knowledge, but is also influenced by the environment in which one lives and other factors such as gender, culture and socio-economic status. Education can provide a safe environment to learn the skills and knowledge which young people need to prepare themselves for adulthood, parenthood, global citizenship and the world of work and life in the twenty-first century.

Gender-based violence in and around schools

School-related gender-based violence has recently emerged as a global concern harming an estimated 245 million children every year, and limiting the prospect of achieving gender equality in schools. It is both a violation of human rights and a major barrier to education, in particular for girls. It encompasses acts of sexual, physical and psychological violence occurring on the journey to, from and in school, and is perpetrated as a result of discriminatory gender norms and practices and unequal power dynamics, and underpinned by gender inequalities in wider society. While school-related gender-based violence may be expressed in different forms and committed by different actors, it is a global phenomenon requiring urgent action from all stakeholders and duty bearers, including multiple government departments, educators and education administrators, communities and children and young people themselves. Children's vulnerability to school-related gender-based violence can increase due to poorly enforced legislation, inadequate child protection policies and weak or non-existent reporting mechanisms. WEF participants recommended that countries should develop integrated, multi-sectoral national action plans to address school-related gender-based violence, and that education sector policies and plans should be gender responsive. They further noted that teachers and teacher unions must be engaged as part of the solution. Education

systems must adopt a comprehensive approach: develop codes of conduct, apply sanctions when necessary, support teachers with appropriate training and professional status, ensure learning spaces are safe and gender-sensitive, and create models of education for peace. Global partners should build awareness and collaboration, and leverage commitment to action, including investing in rigorous research to better understand the nature and scale of the problem.

Inclusive quality education for children with disabilities

Although substantial progress has been made in expanding access to primary and secondary education over the past 15 years, in most low- and middle-income countries, children with disabilities are still less likely to go to school, more likely to drop out early, and less likely to learn key skills such as reading, writing and mathematics than those without disabilities. The lack of an overall system and teacher capacity to operationalize inclusive education, inaccessible schools and absence of learning materials, negative attitudes towards disability, lack of data and insufficient investment are critical bottlenecks which prevent children with disabilities from accessing inclusive education. The failure to provide inclusive education for learners with disabilities is striking, not only from the right to education perspective, but also from a human capital investment logic. Evidence indicates that the returns on investment in the education of persons with disabilities are two to three times higher than that of persons without disabilities. Though there are several obstacles to operationalize inclusive education in developing countries, there was a general agreement among participants that it was one of the main approaches which would enable the achievement of Goal 4 of the SDGs. Systematic investment in building teacher capacity, enhancing accessibility of schools (both physical and learning environment) and generating data and evidence on children with disabilities in inclusive education were pointed out as key to building an effective inclusive education system. Intersectoral collaboration (across various departments like health, education, transport, social services, social protection), implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities by governments, as well as participation of persons with disabilities and the community were also key to ensuring that children with disabilities access quality inclusive education.

7 'Young People Today: Time to Act Now. *Why Adolescents and young people need comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services in Eastern and Southern Africa*'. UNESCO. 2013

Inclusive quality education

- ➡ Equity is at the centre of education and must be considered so for the SDGs.
- ➡ Efforts should be made not only on the supply side, but also on the demand side when it comes to ensuring that all learners get education.
- ➡ Better data and tracking of those missing out on education is essential to help focus efforts and to ensure that no one is left behind.
- ➡ Social media is a key tool for reaching those out of school.

Source: Highlights from 'Equity and inclusion – Leaving no one behind' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Protecting education, schools and universities from attacks and military use

The side-event discussed the grave long-term consequences that increasing conflict and attacks on education can have on individuals, families and communities. Girls are often directly targeted, and due to the risk this poses, parents are more hesitant to send their daughters to school, leaving them deprived of education. More frequently, armed forces turn classrooms into military bases during war. As a result of such attacks, lives are being lost, schools are closing down, teachers and students are too traumatized to attend school, and the quality of education is suffering. The panel recommended that states and the international community should embrace the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, and work together around preventive and responsive mechanisms. The Oslo Conference on 28-29 May 2015 was highlighted as an important opportunity to get states to sign up to the Safe Schools Declaration, endorse the Guidelines and commit to taking practical action to prevent and respond to attacks. Participants further noted that intergovernmental efforts are needed to deal with the increase of radicalism and terrorism that threatens education, teachers and learners. Action to address these issues must focus on the root causes, and go hand in hand with strengthening democracy. Schools must be promoted as places of safety and non-violence, with environments conducive to learning. There is a need for a broader creation of a culture of peace, tolerance and respect, and for bringing this into schools and curriculum. The post-2015 framework must recognize the need to

address attacks on education and promote safe schools.

Strengthening educational responses in times of crisis

Crises of ever increasing complexity and scale are severely impacting access to quality education for millions of children, adolescents and young people world-wide. Since education is fundamentally protective, it should not just be considered as a sector to be included in humanitarian response but rather as *the* response to displacement, conflict and disease. Faced with the devastating effects of crises, education must also be seen as a vehicle of transformation, capable both of mitigating the effects of crisis and ensuring rehabilitation in its wake. Participants at WEF argued that crisis-sensitive planning for education is urgently required if the 2030 targets are to be met. It was felt that a re-think was needed of the approach to education service delivery with system-wide preparation and response mechanisms for emergencies and crisis situations. Existing gaps in funding, data and coordination need to be overcome if educational programming in emergency and crisis situations are to be overcome. The lack of agreement on key principles for implementing and prioritising education among the diversity of local and international humanitarian and development actors involved, is a challenge. While technical standards for implementation do exist in the form of the INEE Minimum Standards, these do not always guide the coordination of overall response and flows of both human and financial resources. It is therefore necessary to create a 'common' or 'bridging' platform for education and crisis, which would identify, and act to address, blockages in aid architecture that cut across both global and country levels. Such a platform would require agreeing and operating under a common set of principles and setting out a common approach to data collection, assessment and education planning. It would also require the establishment of a global fund or finance facility for education in crisis.

Education and crisis

- ➡ A 'common' or 'bridging' platform for education and crisis should be put in place to identify and address blockages in aid architecture that cut across both global and country levels.

Source: Highlights from 'Education and crisis: Toward strengthened response' side event, Wednesday 20 May 2015

Evidence-based education policy and practice

One of the clear messages emerging from the deliberations at WEF concerned the importance of research evidence for effective education policy and practice. It was argued that evidence was first and foremost essential for improving access, retention and quality of education. It was also argued that evidence can be used to provide more cost-effective provision of quality education. Given rising demands for education and increasing pressures on limited financial resources, evidence allows for smart and effective investment. Moreover, sound evidence can serve to advocate for greater political commitment and resource mobilization at both domestic and international levels. Evidence on the impact of education programmes in emergency contexts, for instance, can help strengthen rationales for life saving/protection benefits of education in emergencies and to advocate for a greater share of humanitarian assistance to be allocated to education. Finally, in terms of governance, evidence is essential as a tool for accountability, primarily for national education authorities vis-a-vis their domestic constituencies.

4 Beyond Incheon: rising up to the challenges of implementation

One of the key lessons emerging over the past fifteen years is that, while technical solutions are important, political influence and traction are more so. Political commitment is essential for realizing the scale of reform and action required to achieve basic education for all at the national level. The Incheon Declaration reflects a strong international commitment to education and its centrality in the Sustainable Development agenda for 2030. Translating this ambitious political commitment into effective implementation of the Education 2030 agenda comprises three main sets of challenges that have to do with financing, governance and accountability, as well as with monitoring and coordination. These challenges are synthesized below based on the deliberations of WEF participants in the plenary debates and the range of parallel sessions.

(i) The challenge of strengthening the financing of education

The broad and ambitious nature of the education SDG proposed for 2030 represents, first and foremost, an important challenge for financing. Ensuring greater equity and improving the quality of education will require far higher levels and more *effective* financing for education. WEF participants strongly argued that it will be necessary to unlock all potential resources for education, both international and national, both public and private.

Having said this, it was reaffirmed that education financing depends first and foremost on **domestic public resources**. Many governments have increased spending, but few have prioritized education in national budgets, and most fall short of allocating the recommended international benchmark of 20 percent of public expenditure needed to bridge funding gaps. Domestic public financing of education must be increased and improved. In addition to increasing the share of public resources allocated to education, public resources available for education can be increased by expanding the domestic tax base and opposing tax evasion. Over the next 15 years, development finance will depend first and foremost on domestic resource mobilization, but Official Development

Assistance (ODA) will continue to play an important role, particularly in those countries with substantial financing gaps and furthest from reaching the targets.

Financing education

- On average, between 2000 and 2012, countries increased their spending on education, but this was mainly the result of more revenue, not of prioritization given to education.¹
- Aid to education fell by US\$1.3 billion between 2010 and 2012.¹
- For every child in low- and lower-middle income countries to benefit from an expanded basic education of good quality, the average annual cost will have to increase from \$100 to \$239 billion between 2015 and 2030.¹
- Even if governments spend close to 20 per cent of budget on education, there remains an annual financing gap of \$22 billion to be filled mostly by external sources, which requires aid to increase, four times.¹
- Currently, no finance target exists for education within the SDGs.¹
- There is an increasing need to find different approaches because some traditional vertical (donor-recipient) partnerships have not worked well. Other ways and types of financing need to be explored.²
- Starting from the experience of the health sector in 2009, there is growing evidence that results-based financing works and is now applied in 32 countries with support from donors. The World Bank will double results-based financing to US\$5 billion in the next five years.³

Sources:

- 1 Highlights from 'Setting the stage' high-level panel debate, Tuesday 19 May 2015
- 2 Highlights from 'Beyond aid: Transforming education systems through partnership', parallel session Thursday 21 May 2015
- 3 Highlights from 'Can financing for results help us achieve learning for all?' parallel session, Wednesday 20 May 2015

In addition to the central role of domestic public resources, expanding access to education of better quality will increasingly require the mobilization of external financing from various sources. While the bulk of costs will be borne by governments, the international community must step up, to sustain and increase **aid to education** – especially in lower- and lower-middle income countries where needs are greatest. This has not always been the case. Indeed, following an initial boost in aid budgets after 2000, many donors have reduced aid to education since 2010 and have not sufficiently prioritized those countries most in need. This is particularly true for conflict-affected countries that account for some 34 million of out-of-school children and adolescents. The cost of providing education for these children and adolescents has recently been estimated at some 2.3 billion US dollars or ten times the current level of humanitarian aid to education.⁸ Repeated calls were heard at WEF for the creation of a global fund on education building on the experience of the Global Partnership for Education. However, it was also noted that historical and cultural ties continue to play a role in determining where countries decide to share lessons and provide mutual support. South-South cooperation is essential and needs to be encouraged.

Rising to the ambition of the broad Education 2030 agenda will also require seeking **innovative modalities of financing**, including unlocking the potential of private investment to supplement public funding. Countries have diverse financing models that may be considered to be innovative, in particular economic, social and political, and institutional contexts. Financing for results is considered to be one of these innovative modalities. This includes such modalities as performance-based contracts, school-based management and disbursement linked to indicators. It is argued that the production and use of data inherent to the approach enhances transparency and accountability by increasing pressure to deliver on what was promised, all of which leads to better alignment of donors behind programmes. The fact that financing for results can help demonstrate results is deemed to be particularly important for the education sector when competing for resources with other sectors, in particular that of health where it is often much easier to show investment results. It is true that while the health sector has achieved success in mobilizing private finance, a large funding gap remains in the education

sector. Incentivizing financing for education can be challenging as education outcomes are generational and can be hard to measure.

(ii) The challenge of effective governance and accountability for shared responsibility

While the primary responsibility of providing education lies with governments, **partnerships** with diverse stakeholders are needed. Non-state partners such as civil society organizations, foundations, academia, and business are all key actors which have a stake in education outcomes. It is increasingly accepted by many that business can contribute core assets – including but not limited to funding – to support governments and other partners to provide learning opportunities for all. By combining resources and expertise, the impact of education investments can be maximized.

Yet, WEF participants also underlined that some education partners feel uneasy and fearful about the motives behind business investment in education. The rapidly developing trend of privatization and marketization of education is seen by many as a threat to the universal right to education. The expansion of profit-making and ‘business’ activities and initiatives in education, and for teaching and learning more specifically, may adversely affect equity in education and social justice more broadly. It is argued that evidence does not necessarily support the view that public-private partnerships and low-fee private schools are effective means of addressing education system challenges. On the contrary, opponents of business engagement in education claim that existing evidence demonstrates that privatisation undermines the principle of education as a fundamental human right.

Better communication between diverse education stakeholders, including private business, can improve the climate of trust, enhancing the potential for more effective and sustainable interventions. Multi-stakeholder forums such as the WEF – which bring together government, civil society, academia, donors and business – provide valuable platforms for such dialogue at the global level. Private sector contributions can be strengthened by increasing the share of education in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which currently stands only at 13 per cent. There is an increasing need to do things differently, working in new and different ways as partners, targeting the underlying causes of poverty and moving towards wider-reaching progressive economic, social and political change.

8 EFA GMR Policy Paper No 21 (June 2015). ‘Humanitarian Aid for Education: Why it matters and why more is needed.’ See also EFA GMR Policy Paper No 18 Updated July 2015). ‘Pricing the Right to Education: The costs of reaching the new targets by 2030.’

Good and **effective governance**, it was agreed, will thus be the key to successful engagement of these diverse stakeholders in the delivery of education beyond 2015. Effective governance must be ensured through the participation of all stakeholders at multiple levels through transparent consultative processes. This may require establishing regulatory and collaborative governance frameworks to ensure that the diverse actors, especially non-public/private sector providers of education and international organizations, contribute towards the national vision for education, are aligned with public policies and complement government efforts to efficiently use limited resources. The private/non-public sector should not replace governments' responsibilities to ensure free quality education for all.

Trust, inclusivity and mutual accountability at all levels are central to effective partnership. It is also critical to ensure effective, systematic and transparent access to information concerning education by all stakeholders, especially teachers, parents and students, for their meaningful participation in the process of effective governance. Effective governance involving multiple stakeholders at multiple levels requires the establishment of clear accountability mechanisms according to the stakeholder concerned. Such mechanisms should include the two aspects of accountability in education, consequential accountability and professional accountability, to develop a quality and equitable education systems. It also requires a strengthening of the role of the state in regulating and monitoring education.

(iii) The challenge of monitoring and coordinating the future agenda for global education

The expansion of the global education agenda requires a broader monitoring framework than has been the case during the EFA period, including data collection, analysis and dissemination, both for effective system management and for stakeholder accountability. The draft Framework for Action included the proposal of the Technical Advisory Group on post-2015 education indicators and outlined the steps for finalizing this proposal by November 2015. The main components of this proposal and the principles behind its recommendations were presented in a parallel session on indicators that opened the floor for a discussion on priorities and challenges.

The session also provided an opportunity to present big ideas that will help unify the approach to some of the key monitoring challenges. These included steps towards: (i) a common learning metric, which will

help provide comparable cross-country evidence not only on how many children and youth complete school, but also on how many achieve expected learning standards; (ii) an inter-agency group to disaggregate survey-based education indicators and provide comparable measures of education inequality; and (iii) an approach to national education accounts that will give a comprehensive picture of expenditure by governments, donors and households.

Agreeing on a monitoring framework is only the first step towards implementing it and acting on its findings. The parallel session on global and regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms provided several insights on the challenges faced in implementing an agenda which is both different in modality as well as in content.

At the global level, monitoring progress in the education sector will be part of the global architecture under the SDGs. This will involve both cross-sector apex institutions, such as the High Level Political Forum and its associated follow-up and review mechanisms, but also established thematic mechanisms, such as the Global Education Monitoring Report.

These mechanisms should address complex challenges of monitoring a broader set of targets in education, including the monitoring of a greater number of educational levels with diverse modalities of provision, as well as broad notions linked to the relevance of learning content. Collaboration within and across sectors will therefore be key, particularly so as the central role of education is emphasized for achieving results in all other Sustainable Development Goals. While internationally comparable data are key to global monitoring, one of the main challenges for countries lies in the need to strengthen the capacity of national and local systems to collect, analyze, and use both quantitative and qualitative data. Support is needed to build capacity in low-income countries.

In addition to capacity-building, the United Nations has a special collective responsibility for coordination of the post-2015 agenda at the global level under the close supervision and guidance of its Member States. The convening agencies are committed to collectively supporting countries in implementing Education 2030. The challenge to build a strong global coordination mechanism to effectively support the implementation of a very ambitious agenda was entrusted to UNESCO.

The issue of balance between global, regional and national/local aspirations remains a question

and has implications for both monitoring and coordination. It is important, in this respect, to re-emphasize the importance of using existing mechanisms for coordination and monitoring at different levels – global, regional and national. There is a need to give voice to, and learn from, regional monitoring mechanisms. In doing so, it is essential to ensure greater coherence through more systemic and simplified approaches that avoid additional layers of reporting. There is a consequent need for the harmonization of frameworks at different levels, in particular at regional and national levels – ensuring that integrated inter-sectoral frameworks are in place. There is also a need for engagement with the non-state sector through public/private partnerships, as well as with other public sectors beyond education such as finance, social affairs etc. The process should allow for sector dialogue involving different stakeholders and ensure linkages between coordination, monitoring and policy development.

While evidence is increasingly used in education programming and policy, it is still used insufficiently. Recent years have seen improvements in the breadth and quality of education data, and evidence is helping to better understand where, why, and how students are learning, as well as the relevance of what they learn. An increasing number of countries are undertaking national large-scale assessments or taking part in regional and international assessments and using the results to inform their education policy discussions and decisions. Arguably, however, more evidence is required about education systems and the complexities surrounding their effectiveness. It is therefore important to improve the understanding of education systems through diagnostic exercises and research grounded in country realities.

Implementation of the global Education 2030 agenda must entail a stronger focus on the country level – on country-driven processes and mechanisms for review and follow up. There should, consequently, be room for adjustment of targets at the country level. The Framework for Action for Education 2030 should be seen as a methodology rather than a prescriptive set of implementation strategies. The objective of the Education 2030 agenda, together with its proposed Framework for Action, is to enable countries to have a contextualized strategy, based on their national priorities, opportunities for resource mobilization and local challenges, and to attain the global benchmarks in an incremental manner. The Education 2030 agenda is universal in that it provides benchmarks for all countries, whether in the global North or the global South, while recognizing the diversity of local development contexts.

Global and regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms

- Experience of regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms were shared and discussed during the session, including examples from the African Union's education, science and technology coordination and monitoring structure, the EFA coordination structure in Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC), the EFA coordination structure in Asia and the Pacific based on policy reviews, as well as the European Union open mechanism for coordination as applied in education and its two main strategies, the strategy for jobs and growth 2020 and the strategy for education and training 2020.
- The main example of a global thematic monitoring mechanism serving the international education community has been the EFA Global Monitoring Report, which will continue as the Global Education Monitoring Report with a renewed mandate.
- At the global level, the High Level Political Forum, the main UN platform on sustainable development, is where cross-sectoral issues will be clustered for review every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly, and every year under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. Source: Highlights from 'Global and regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms' parallel session, Thursday 21 May 2015

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Incheon, Republic of Korea

19-21 May 2015

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WEF 2015

Detailed programme

Day 1 – Tuesday 19 May 2015

14.30-16.00 Opening Ceremony

Speakers

Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Ms Park Geun-hye, President of the Republic of Korea

Mr Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

Mr Jim Yong Kim, President, World Bank Group

Mr Anthony Lake, Executive Director, UNICEF

Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women

Mr Kailash Satyarthi, Laureate of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize

H.H. Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser of Qatar, UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education

16.30-18.00 High-level panel debate: 'Setting the stage'

Presentation by Mr Aaron Benavot, Director, EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO

This session stimulated a debate on the future of education, drawing on the findings of the independent EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, the regional analyses of some 120 National EFA 2015 Reviews and the publication *'Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?'*

Day 2 – Wednesday 20 May 2015

09.00-10.30 Plenary Session 1

Education 2030 – Proposed Agenda and Framework for Action

Moderator: Mr Ahlin Byll-Cataria, former Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa

Presentation by Mr Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

This session discussed the overall 2030 education agenda and Framework for Action, and the draft WEF 2015 Declaration.

11.00-12.30 Thematic Debates

These six parallel thematic debates generated discussions around six cross-cutting issues to deepen understanding of the thinking underlying Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education.

Thematic debate 1. Equity and inclusion – Leaving no one behind (organized by UNICEF)

Chair: Mr Anthony Lake, Executive Director, UNICEF

Education is one of the most wide-reaching and beneficial development investments. Yet the optimism that characterized early progress – build more schools and they will come – has not reached the poorest children, those living in conflict situations, refugees, internally displaced people, or children facing discrimination based on location, gender, disability or ethnic minority status. This thematic debate focused on the major challenges and opportunities to inform a robust

inclusive social agenda. The objective was to convene an evidence-based debate on equity in education; equip policy and decision-makers with tools to advocate for equity and inclusion; and encourage governments to identify and target resources for the groups being left furthest behind. The session was organized around two moderated panel discussions combining speakers from various fields including Ministers of Education, UN representatives, economists, academics and civil society organizations.

Thematic debate 2. Education in conflict and crisis (organized by UNHCR)

Chair: Mr Daniel Endres, Director, Division of External Relations, UNHCR

This session addressed the question of how we ensure access to education for children and young people in crisis-affected situations in the 2030 agenda. Invited speakers outlined how conflict and crisis have hampered progress towards realizing the Education for All goals and the way forward to mitigate the impact of crisis on achievement of the 2030 education targets. Highlighting key challenges, good practices and lessons learned, the discussion focused on the need for crisis-sensitive planning, partnerships and financing in the 2030 agenda era to ensure that every child in crisis-affected situations has access to safe, quality education.

Thematic debate 3. Can financing for results help us achieve learning for all? (organized by the World Bank Group)

Chair: Mr Keith Hansen, Vice-President, World Bank Group

This thematic debate highlighted the critical role of financing in the achievement of the education goal to ensure inclusive equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all. This thematic debate: (i) provided an overview of current education financing and the challenges associated with financing the 2030 education agenda; (ii) underscored the need for more equitable, efficient and innovative financing in education; (iii) highlighted the experiences through country cases and share recommended strategies to improve the results of both domestic and international education investments. Panelists discussed issues related to education financing and strategies that have successfully led to more and better education services and results, especially for the most marginalized.

Thematic debate 4. Achieving gender equality in education and empowering women and girls: looking ahead and planning together (organized by UN Women)

Chair: Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women

Despite decades of promoting education for all, gender equality in education remains an elusive and incomplete agenda. Women and girls have not benefited equally from education and training. Even when they have access to education, girls face many interrelated and intersecting challenges that prevent them from reaching their full potential. Today's challenges remain despite firm and strong global commitments to address the education of girls and women as a priority. This thematic debate looked forward to a cross-sectoral approach to tackling these challenges in an effort to achieve the proposed SDG4 (Education), while also enhancing the empowerment of women and girls as foreseen in the proposed SDG5 (Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls). Lessons were drawn, as applicable, from the implementation of earlier intergovernmental commitments and frameworks, including Education for All, the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs.

Thematic debate 5. Placing quality education at the centre of lifelong learning (organized by UNESCO)

Chair: Mr David Edwards, Deputy General Secretary, Education International

More children are in school than ever before, but what are they learning? The 2014 GMR estimates that 250 million children do not know the basics, whether or not they had schooling, and that 200 million young people leave schools without the skills they need to thrive. There is growing consensus that focus needs to be placed on the quality of education in the 2030 education agenda. Yet views differ regarding the nature and determinants of a 'good quality education', as well on the most effective policy levers for enhancing knowledge and skills acquisition. This session examined key strategies to advance the quality of education and improve learning outcomes, including through addressing the shortage of teachers and their qualifications, curricular relevance, the availability of learning materials, and learning processes and environments. It also looked at how quality education can best be measured and monitored.

Thematic debate 6. Innovating through technology: shaping the future of education (organized by UNESCO)

Chair: Ms Dorothy Gordon, Chair of the Governing Board, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

Education has been slow to embrace innovations and technologies that have improved other sectors such as health and entertainment. Schooling today looks strikingly similar to schooling provided 50 years ago. Yet at a moment when there are as many internet-connected devices on the planet as there are people, few doubt that technology is likely to disrupt traditional models of learning. For many observers, the question is not whether technological innovation will change education, but when and how. What should governments do to ensure that technology enhances pedagogy, meets the needs of students and teachers, and improves educational outcomes? This session examined strategies to make education systems more effective through technology, paying close attention to principles that should guide this process. It sought to reconcile tension between competing claims about the utility and value of technology, and determine how education systems can better identify, incubate and scale up innovative ideas.

12.30-14.30 Lunchtime side-events

14.30-16.00 Parallel Group Sessions I

Discussing the global targets

These 10 parallel group sessions discussed the global targets of the 2030 education agenda and education-related targets of other SDGs. Specific focus was given to key policy measures, strategies and priority actions that are proposed in the Framework for Action to support their implementation and formulate recommendations.

Parallel session 1. Quality primary and secondary education – an increased focus on learning

Chair: Ms Claudia Costin, Senior Director, World Bank Group

This session addressed the target to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. A focus on learning and equity was at the forefront of the discussion, which brought to light the challenges and opportunities surrounding how education systems can provide all children with quality basic education that will enable them to learn the skills necessary to succeed in life and work. Panelists shared knowledge and experience in this area, highlighting in particular strategies and priority areas that help ensure this education target is achievable.

Parallel session 2. Early childhood care and education – a critical investment for lifelong learning and development

Chair: Ms Pia Rebello Britto, Senior Advisor, Early Childhood Development, UNICEF

Early Childhood Development, the first stage of lifelong learning, is the great equalizer. Young children and families who have access to quality care, nutrition, protection and education are not only more likely to beat the odds of disadvantage but also contribute to societal and economic development. Therefore, equitable and early investment in quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes is required to achieve results in children's development and learning. The aim of this session was to increase global commitment to investing in this target by outlining the investment rationales for ECCE, sharing and discussing effective strategies for addressing and monitoring the equity, quality, holistic approach and outcomes of ECCE services and programmes. The session was organized around a moderated discussion among panel experts from various fields including Ministers of Education, UN representatives, economists, academics and civil society organizations.

Parallel session 3. Higher education – preparing youth and adults for work and lifelong learning

Chair: Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UNESCO

At no time in history has it been more important to invest in higher education. Demand for access to tertiary programmes has surged, fueled by unprecedented numbers of secondary school graduates and the greatly increased need for trained teachers generated by global efforts to achieve the Education for All goals. At the same time, a rapidly-changing labour market is placing new demands on higher education as an important component of lifelong learning pathways, while societies are increasingly relying on research and innovation carried out by tertiary institutions. This session considered how societies can accommodate growing demand for higher education in the post-2015 era, promote internationalization, design funding systems that foster quality and equity, and strengthen the contribution of higher education institutions to graduates' employment and job creation.

Parallel session 4. Skills for work and entrepreneurship

Chair: Mr Hamed Al Hammami, Director, UNESCO

Skills development will be an important feature of the 2030 education agenda, while at the same time being deeply embedded in the broader global development agenda. Yet challenges such as lack of TVET policy coordination and coherence, weak governance structures, skills gaps and the low relevance of vocational qualifications are impeding TVET's contribution to sustainable development. Addressing this requires shifting TVET from a supply-driven mode to one that is impelled by the demands of the world of work and individuals. In addition to work-specific skills, attention must be paid to entrepreneurship, problem solving, 'learning to learn', and other high-level cognitive and interpersonal skills that are essential for decent work and lifelong learning. This session considered how governments can promote systemic reforms, including through strengthening links with the private sector and other stakeholders outside the TVET sector; improve the relevance of qualifications; and increase and diversify funding for skills development.

Parallel session 5. Ensuring equity and gender equality in education and training: perspectives from vulnerable populations

Chair: Mr Yannick Glemarec, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women

Despite progress made towards achieving the Education for All goals, disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and rural dwellers, often fare badly. Women and girls from these groups face additional, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination with respect to their education. For marginalized populations, access to education is often not assured, even if it is free; the right to education of quality is often not recognized; and the quality of education provided is poor, affecting learning outcomes and overall empowerment. This session discussed strategies to enable all children and adults, regardless of status, to realize their right to education. It drew on the perspectives of vulnerable and marginalized groups, with a view to outlining a set of recommendations to guide the holistic pursuit of the proposed equity target of SDG4.

Parallel session 6. Expanding the vision: youth and adult literacy within a lifelong learning perspective

Chair: Ms Ann-Therese Ndong-Jatta, Director, UNESCO

Worldwide, some 781 million adults [as of May 2015], of whom two-thirds are women, are reported to be unable to read and write. Low literacy skills are a concern globally, including in middle and high income countries; indeed, since 2000, only a quarter of countries have reduced their adult illiteracy rates by 50%. Moreover, in many cases the need for learners to acquire literacy and numeracy proficiency levels that are equivalent to basic education and set the foundation for lifelong learning is not recognized. This session discussed key strategies to enhance access to quality and innovative literacy learning opportunities, strengthen long-term and dependable investment in literacy, and deepen multi-stakeholder partnerships and decentralized participatory action through a network of learning cities, communities and families.

Parallel session 7. Educating and learning for peaceful and sustainable societies

Chair: Ms Soo-Hyang Choi, Director, UNESCO

In today's rapidly changing and interconnected world, learners are required to develop a comprehensive understanding of local, national and global challenges, with skills and attitudes to assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and to resolve these challenges. To meet this demand, education systems as a whole need to be supported or even re-oriented. The Global Education First Initiative has marked a significant step forward in this direction by considering global citizenship as one of its three priorities, and the UN General Assembly has acknowledged the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. Against this background, this session sought to engage participants in a lively discussion on how global citizenship education and education for sustainable development can be effectively integrated in education systems in order to help improve the relevance of education in our contemporary world and its capacity to contribute to achieving sustainable development.

Parallel session 8. Teachers for the world we want – agenda for policy, practice and research

Chair: Mr Jorge Sequeira, Director, UNESCO

Realizing the right to quality education means ensuring that every learner is taught by a qualified, motivated and professionally supported teacher. However, education quality is currently undermined by teacher shortages and the inequitable distribution of qualified teachers within and across countries. It is therefore essential to attract and support the best students to become teachers, while retaining them in the profession with continuous professional development and appropriate working conditions. In so doing, effective and continuous dialogue among policy-makers, teachers and researchers is critical. This session engaged participants in an interactive discussion addressing: the state-of-the

art and trends in teacher education, including heightened expectations on teachers and the multiple challenges they continue to face in and out of the classroom; and key strategies for effective teacher policy reform, including social dialogue.

Parallel session 9. Healthy bodies, bright minds: health, HIV and sexuality education

Chair: Ms Julia Bunting, President, Population Council

Healthy learners learn better, and better educated learners have the knowledge and skills to be healthy. Strengthening the links between these two fundamental domains of human well-being is a critical approach to achieving sustainable development. Education serves as a 'social vaccine' against infectious disease, such as HIV. Effective life-skills based sexuality education that includes cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and risk assessment; social skills, such as communication; and emotional skills, such as empathy, can help prevent HIV and unintended pregnancy and contribute towards gender equality, economic opportunities and sustainable development, while building on basic skills and capacitating learners to answer the big questions of the day. This session helped delegates to understand the role of sexuality education in improving health and gender equality, and highlighted the interrelationship between health and education and the impact on EFA and the broader SDG agenda, including proposed Goal 3 on Health.

Parallel session 10. Framing and developing indicators to measure progress for the 2030 education targets

Chair: Ms Silvia Montoya, Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

This session presented the recommendations of the Technical Advisory Group on Post-2015 Education Indicators, which underscore the urgent need for the education community to address new issues and measurement challenges, especially in relation to education quality and equity, as part of the new development agenda. It considered strategies for: assessing learning across and within different national contexts, including the need to enhance national capacities to develop, implement, analyze and use assessments; identifying indicators to measure progress in reducing inequalities across all of the education targets; and new approaches to collecting more comprehensive data on the different sources and uses of funding for education and training.

16.30-18.00 Plenary Session 2

Education drives development – the example of the Republic of Korea

Welcoming remarks by Mr Woo-Yea Hwang, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, the Republic of Korea – Presentation by Mr Sun-Geun Baek, President, Korean Educational Development Institute

Chair: Mr Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals

This session discussed the central role of education in national development, focusing on the Republic of Korea's experience in and through educational development. It reviewed educational strategies and policy options to address current and upcoming challenges.

Day 3 – Thursday 21 May 2015

09.00-10.30 Parallel Group Sessions II

What does it take to implement the 2030 education agenda?

These 10 parallel sessions discussed implementation processes and mechanisms needed to realize the future agenda and make recommendations in view of the adoption of the Framework for Action.

Parallel session 1. Global and regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms

Chair: Mr David Atchoarena, Director, UNESCO

The success of Education 2030 depends on effective national, regional and global action. This will require robust mechanisms for coordination and monitoring at all levels. These mechanisms should be based on the principles of inclusiveness, participation and transparency, and build on existing mechanisms. This session focused on the regional and global levels to support country-driven actions and highlighted progress and outstanding challenges in monitoring

and accountability mechanisms since 2000. In light of the new agenda, it will discuss the kinds of global and regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms and practices that may be needed. The session further explored how global and regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms for education should work alongside, and complement, emergent coordination and monitoring mechanisms for the overall SDG.

Parallel session 2. Effective governance and accountability

Chair: Mr GwangJo Kim, Director, UNESCO

Contemporary national education governance systems are multi-layered and complex. The multiplication of private actors in the delivery, management and monitoring of education further increases the challenge of governing effectively and transparently, while decentralization means subnational government bodies and local actors have increased responsibilities and authority. In this context, coordination and partnership are essential to safeguard equal access to quality education and the efficient use of limited resources. This session explored the roles education authorities play, identified key policies and strategies to build a regulatory and collaborative governance framework in a context of growing marketization, and identified accountability systems that can help build quality and equitable education systems.

Parallel session 3. Beyond aid: transforming education systems through partnership

Chair: Mr Nick Dyer, Director-General for Policy and Global Programmes, Department for International Development, United Kingdom

Delivering the ambitious vision of the Framework for Action should be country-led, but transforming education systems to deliver learning for all also requires countries to work together in meaningful partnership. Countries should learn from one another: from finding out how to strengthen and improve education systems to prioritizing policies based on the best available evidence. The international community also plays a vital role in supporting partnerships and ensuring no one is left behind. This session presented country and international perspectives on the role of development cooperation and partnership beyond 2015. Contributions were rooted in countries' need to identify new ways of working in partnerships and multilaterally to add the greatest value and respond to global gaps. The discussion drew on central themes of learning and equity, to shift the debate from a focus on development finance to an emphasis on meaningful partnerships to catalyze change.

Parallel session 4. Can there be development without capacity? Principles from national sector analysis and planning

Chair: Ms Suzanne Grant Lewis, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning

Capacity development is recognized as fundamental to achieving sustainable development and one of the main pillars of international development cooperation. While there is consensus on the importance of capacity development, the choice of strategies is still being debated, particularly how to move away from the development of individual capacity to sustainable institutional capacity. This session considered several propositions for successful capacity development programmes for education sector analysis and planning. It explored the political complexity of long-term commitment to strengthening national capacity, identified strategies for strengthening capacity, considered lessons for strengthening national centres, and identified additional principles of capacity development that are emerging from experiences.

Parallel session 5. Providing meaningful learning opportunities to out-of-school children

Chair: Ms Jo Bourne, Associate Director for Education, UNICEF

Despite the promises of the Millennium Declaration and Education for All, around the world, one child in eleven is still not enrolled in school. This session will provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the profiles of children out of school in different regions of the world and the barriers that they face, drawing on recent analyses conducted under the Out of School Children Initiative (OOSCI). A panel of expert speakers explored the changes that are needed in countries that have large out-of-school populations as well as examples of effective approaches in countries that are 'in the final mile'. The session concluded with descriptions of alternative learning programmes that have been shown to meet the needs of children and adolescents who either have little prospect of going to school or who have already dropped out of education.

Parallel session 6. Using evidence in policy-making and practice

Chair: Mr Amit Dar, Director, Education Global Practice, World Bank Group

This session focused on the importance of evidence in education policy-making and practice as a key factor in the successful implementation of the 2030 education agenda. Investments in what works in education are urgently needed given the increased reach of the education agenda. Strong evidence on education outcomes, on what programmes

work best to change those outcomes, and on the systems in place to implement those programmes widely is of central importance in informing policy and programming decisions across all countries, agencies and organizations working with education systems around the world. Through a moderated discussion, a panel of policy-makers, civil society, academics and development agency representatives discussed their experience with developing and using evidence in education policy making, highlighting strategies that have successfully led to more and better education system reforms while also pointing to the difficulties surrounding the development and use of evidence in policy-making.

Parallel session 7. Operationalizing lifelong learning

Chair: Mr Arne Carlsen, Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

As a key feature and principle of the 2030 education agenda, ‘lifelong learning’ must be at the centre of educational reform efforts, while also underlying the development of learning systems that reach beyond the education sector. Yet although the concept of lifelong learning is generally understood and appreciated, questions remain concerning its operationalization. Now, faced with the global challenges of the 21st century, it has become even more imperative for each and every country to make lifelong learning for all a reality. This session analyzed progress, trends and challenges in countries towards the achievement of lifelong learning for all; shared countries’ best practices in formulating and implementing policies and strategies for the development of lifelong learning systems and societies; and considered an operational definition of lifelong learning as well as ways to monitor and measure progress.

Parallel session 8. Mobilizing business to realize the 2030 education agenda

Chair: Mr Justin van Fleet, Chief of Staff, Office of the UN Special Envoy for Global Education

Now more than ever, business is partnering with civil society and governments to create new solutions to improve learning and data collection for education; to help align curricula with workplace needs; to develop technologies for delivering education including to the most marginalized; and to engage in multi-stakeholder platforms. Yet, globally, corporate support to health is 16 times what it is to education. This session established a business case to invest in education and focused on how business can coordinate action with other education stakeholders. Panelists shared their perspectives on how business has the potential to impact learning, how using business assets can raise the overall profile of the 2030 education agenda, and what successful business community engagement looks like. It also considered how business, government and civil society can work together to overcome barriers to learning.

Parallel session 9. The role of civil society in education

Chair: Ms Patience Stephens, Director/Special Advisor on Education, UN Women

The international community has recognized the pivotal role of civil society in achieving the EFA goals. Indeed, civil society organizations can help broaden public awareness, initiate and undertake critical policy dialogue and evidence-based advocacy interventions, promote more transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, and undertake innovative education approaches, especially to reach the most marginalized groups – thus contributing towards the promotion of inclusive, quality, and equitable education and lifelong learning for all. The session aimed to take stock of the contributions, success stories, bottlenecks and lessons arising from civil society’s active engagement in EFA since 2000, and proposed concrete recommendations on the roles and contributions of civil society organizations as well as strategies for civil society support to ensure the full realization of Education 2030.

Parallel session 10. The 2030 education targets: What our societies gain by achieving this universal agenda

Chair: Mr Mamadou Ndoye, former Minister of Education, Senegal

The session discussed the findings of a new OECD report that analyzes the social and economic gains of reaching the post-2015 education targets. New evidence was used to make the case for ensuring that every child born in 2015 attains a baseline level of proficiency in the skills needed for further education, work and life by 2030. According to the report, if the poorest countries were to achieve this goal, their GDP would grow on average 28% each year until 2095. The session examined how far countries have to travel if they are to realize these returns, highlighting the universal relevance of the post-2015 targets and providing insights on the education policies and practices that can spur their achievement. The experiences of successful education systems were showcased to reveal how investment in education can be leveraged to yield the best results.

11.00-12.30 Plenary Session III

How does education contribute to sustainable development post-2015?

Co-chairs: Mr Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, UNFPA, and Ms Amina Mohammed, Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning

Sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone. Achieving sustainable development is only truly possible through cross-sectoral efforts in which education plays a key role – not any type of education, but one that addresses the interdependence of environment, economy and society, and helps bring about the fundamental change of mindsets needed to trigger action for sustainable development. Recognizing the important role of education, the SDGs not only reflect education as a stand-alone goal, but also include targets on education under other SDGs, notably on health, growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change. This session highlighted and debated the interlinkages between education and other sustainable development issues. It underscored the transformative power of education and discussed the importance of cross-sectoral approaches. Panel members debated how education can address global challenges with particular focus on how education contributes to addressing climate change, health and poverty reduction.

12.30-14.30 Lunchtime side-events

14.30-16.00 Plenary Session IV

Education 2030: Agreement on the Framework for Action and adoption of the final Declaration

Co-Chairs: Mr Dankert Vedeler, Deputy Director-General, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and Chairman of the EFA Steering Committee, and Mr Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

The objective of this session was to have all participants adopt the WEF 2015 Declaration, which reflects the common vision of the education community on Education 2030, and agree on a comprehensive Framework for Action that will guide and support the implementation of the future education agenda.

16.30-18.00 High-Level Statements and Closing Ceremony

High-level representatives of different stakeholders, such as governments, agencies, NGOs and private sector, made public commitments to implement the proposed education agenda.

Lunchtime side-events – 20 May

Advancing education for dignity, prosperity and justice

Global Governance of the SDG's Education Goal and its Targets

Organisers: Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training (NORRAG), Campaign for Popular education (CAMPE- Bangladesh) & Global Campaign for Education (GCE)

This side-event looked critically at global and national governance of the proposed Education Goal and its Targets in terms of three dimensions: a) their universal application to 'North and South', but acknowledging their common but differentiated responsibilities b) their relationship to inclusive, resilient and sustainable growth, and c) their link to participatory institutions, including post-conflict societies. The side-event panel represented two global networks, civil society, a bilateral agency and academia.

Violence, Vulnerability and Voice: Ending Gender-Based Violence in and around Schools, Advancing Gender Equality in Education

Organisers: Plan International & United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is a global issue harming the education of millions of children around the world and limiting the prospect of achieving gender equality in schools. Within the context of the World Education Forum and post-2015 agenda, panelists discussed the emerging global consensus on SRGBV and offered practical steps that key stakeholders can take to advance gender equality in education and ensure all children learn without fear.

Protecting Education, Schools and Universities from Attacks and Military Use

Organisers: Government of Norway, Global Campaign for Education (GCE)

The frequency and brutality of attacks on education and the education community – on students, teachers, schools and other education workers – and the appropriation of education facilities for military use are a source of serious concern, and are significantly undermining the global achievement of the right to education. Such attacks and misuse of education facilities have lasting effects, for those directly targeted, and also on the strength and resilience of the education system as a whole. This event discussed the nature and impact of recent attacks on education and military use of school facilities, including from national civil society representatives and global experts. It also focused significantly on proposed strategies to prevent and respond to both attacks and military use, with a particular focus on the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use, which were developed through a consultation process spearheaded by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) in 2012 and finalized under the leadership of Norway and Argentina.

Education and Crisis: Toward Strengthened Response

Organisers: Save the Children & Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

From 11 to 22 May 2015, the Inter-agency Network for Education and Emergencies (INEE) hosted a global consultation on 'Education and Crisis: Towards Strengthened Response' as part of the preparation process for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development. This side event was an opportunity for WEF participants to share their views on this topic and, in particular, how to improve existing aid architecture and coordination to better ensure quality education is available to all children in crisis.

Transforming Learning and Training Environments: Advancing Education for Sustainable Development Through a Whole-Institution Approach

Organisers: Centre for Environment Education (CEE), African Development Bank (AfDB), Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) & United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), launched at the World Conference on ESD in Japan in November 2014 as the follow up to the UN Decade of ESD, identifies whole-institution approaches as one of the five Priority Action Areas for generating and scaling up ESD action in the coming years. Sustainable learning environments, such as eco-schools or green campuses, allow educators and learners alike to integrate sustainability principles into their daily practice. Transforming learning and training environments concerns not only managing physical facilities more sustainably, but also changing the ethos and governance structure of the whole institution. The integration of sustainable development across the whole-institution makes it possible for learners to practice sustainable development in their daily lives – to live what they learn.

A Global Response to Privatisation and Commercialisation of Education

Organisers: Education International (EI) & Global Campaign for Education (GCE)

The fast growing global trend of education privatisation and commercialisation is a particularly harmful threat to the universal right to education. Public-private partnerships and low-fee private schools have been hailed by various actors as the solution to addressing education system challenges. But what does the evidence show? This event problematised the expansion of profit-making and 'business' activities and initiatives in education for teaching and learning specifically, and outlined the implications for education systems and social justice more broadly.

The Role of Soft Skills in the Future of Global Education

Organisers: LEGO Foundation & Brookings Institute

Unlike literacy and numeracy, soft skills are frequently overlooked by parents, educators, and policymakers, yet they are crucial for children's development. This session made a case to equally value hard and soft skills, and presented leading research through interactive hands-on activities with event participants.

From MDGs to SDGs: Fulfilling the Promise of Inclusive Quality Education for Children with Disabilities

Organisers: Children's Rights & Emergency Relief Organization (UNICEF)

There has been substantial progress in primary and secondary education over the past 15 years. But due to a range of barriers in most low and middle income countries, children with disabilities are still less likely to go to school, more likely to drop out early, and less likely to learn key skills such as reading, writing and mathematics than children without disabilities. In this session, speakers representing the political, economic, practitioner and consumer perspectives engaged in an interactive debate on issues posed by a moderator and participants. Issues included whether children

with disabilities were overlooked in the MDGs, the targets and indicators that should be included in the SDGs, how to address the data and funding gaps, and what if anything is missing from the Framework for Action.

Making the Case for Safe Schools

Organisers: Plan International, International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), Save the Children, World Vision, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Children's Rights and Emergency Relief Organization (UNICEF), Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) & UNESCO

The Worldwide Initiative on Safe School (WISS), launched during the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), is a government-led multi-stakeholder initiative that serves as a global partnership for advancing safe school implementation at the national level. It is based on the Comprehensive Safe School Framework (CSS), which aims in making every school safe from all hazards, guarantying education in emergencies and including DRR Education. The session discussed progress made thus far.

Lunchtime side-events – 21 May

New approaches for new contexts: Innovations for transformative teaching and learning

A Global Book Fund: Making Early Grade Reading Books Available for All

Organisers: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Government of Norway, Government of UK, Children's Rights and Emergency Relief Organization (UNICEF), Global Partnership for Education (GPE) & Save the children

The Global Book Fund could significantly contribute to the achievement of post-2015 goals by radically altering the landscape for the provision of the reading materials that are an essential element for the resolution of the global reading crisis. Discussing plans for the Fund, discovering ways in which they could be strengthened, and deepening consideration of the partnerships that will be necessary for the Fund's success, all of which will take place during this event, assisted the international community to lay the foundations for a Global Book Fund that will efficiently and effectively advance the cause of Education For All.

The Vanguard of Change: the Role of Young People in a Powerful New Education Agenda

Organiser: UN Global Education First Initiative (GEFI)

This side event was an open discussion between government and youth representatives attending the World Education Forum, and launched a 'Call to Action' that is drawn from the numerous documents created by youth led processes in the lead up to 2015. The Call to Action highlights the importance of partnering with young people and aims to support governments in their implementation of the Framework for Action.

How Understanding Education Systems Can Help to Endure Learning for All?

Organisers: Department for International Development (DFID) UK, Center for Global Development & World Bank

This session brought together the Center for Global Development, the UK Department for International Development, and the World Bank Group to explore education systems research. Education systems have come a long way in ensuring children around the world are able to enroll in school. Yet we know that many children, especially those most marginalized, are still unable to access and complete their education. Alarming, we also know that those children who are enrolling in school are not learning. 'The learning crisis' has led us (the global education community) to question the appropriateness and relevance of the education being delivered globally. There is a strong case for a systems approach to education reform.

Effectively Transforming Learning and Teaching with Technology

Organiser: Intel Education

With unprecedented collaboration between governments, educators and industry partners, Intel's model for education transformation has enabled student success and helped build thriving communities around the world. The side event showcased case studies of how diverse schools and institutions have addressed challenges ranging from access to quality to prepare students for success in the global economy. This panel demonstrated that by working together we can improve learning and teaching for all.

Repositioning Curriculum in Education Quality & Development-Relevance

Organiser: UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)

This side event tabled for discussion an IBE paper on the new curriculum paradigm the world needs NOW if education is to effectively play its role as an SDG in its own right, and as an essential enabler of other SDGs. The session further discussed pedagogies required to effectively and equitably facilitate learning and assessment approaches to support learning.

Current and New Directions for Measuring Global Citizenship Education

Organisers: Brookings Institution & UN Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) Youth Advocacy Group

The panel explored existing formative and summative assessment methods and new ideas for measuring the learning outcomes of Global Citizenship Education, in terms of new knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. The discussion was based on the preliminary findings of the study commissioned by UNESCO, aiming to identify potential indicators for measuring GCED and ESD learning outcomes and look into data collection issues as well as a working paper which focuses on the review of existing tools and the measurement of GCED key competencies at local and school levels. During the event, participants discussed the issue of how to define and measure concepts related to global citizenship.

New Power of Youth and Adult Education – Contribution to the Transformative Post-2015 Agenda

Organisers: International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) & DW International – Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association

Youth and Adult Education plays a key role across the development agenda as the prerequisite for the achievement of all other sustainable development goals. The session brought examples and shared experiences from different countries and regions, showing how youth and adult education can play the transformative role for person, economy and society, by linking various social partners, formal and non-formal education and learning, liberal and vocational education and learning.

The Experience of Middle Income Countries Participating in PISA, 2000-2015

Organisers: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) & World Bank

The session provided answers to six important questions about middle-income countries and their experiences of participating in PISA: What is the extent of developing country participation in PISA and other international learning assessments? Why do these countries join PISA? What are the financial, technical, and cultural challenges for their participation in PISA? What impact has participation had on their national assessment capacity? How have PISA results influenced their national policy discussions? And what do PISA data tell us about education in these countries and the policies and practices that influence student performance?

School Feeding, the Drive of Agriculture and Local Development: Prospects for Africa

Organisers: Ministry of Education of Niger & World Food Programme (WFP)

The session shared with participants the role and impact of school feeding and demonstrated the impact it can have on agriculture production, by linking Home Grown School Feeding with local production. The session was an opportunity to show that school feeding, as a safety net, allows economies to ensure inclusive growth, and contributes to achieving equitable and sustainable development.

Incheon Declaration

Incheon, Republic of Korea

21 May 2015

Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

Preamble

1. We, Ministers, heads and members of delegations, heads of agencies and officials of multilateral and bilateral organizations, and representatives of civil society, the teaching profession, youth and the private sector, have gathered in May 2015 at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO in Incheon, Republic of Korea, for the World Education Forum 2015 (WEF 2015). We thank the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea for having hosted this important event as well as UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR, as the co-convenors of this meeting, for their contributions. We express our sincere appreciation to UNESCO for having initiated and led the convening of this milestone event for Education 2030.
2. On this historic occasion, we reaffirm the vision of the worldwide movement for Education for All initiated in Jomtien in 1990 and reiterated in Dakar in 2000 — the most important commitment to education in recent decades and which has helped drive significant progress in education. We also reaffirm the vision and political will reflected in numerous international and regional human rights treaties that stipulate the right to education and its interrelation with other human rights. We acknowledge the efforts made; however, we recognize with great concern that we are far from having reached education for all.
3. We recall the Muscat Agreement developed through broad consultations and adopted at the Global Education for All (EFA) Meeting 2014, and which successfully informed the proposed education targets of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We further recall the outcomes of the regional ministerial conferences on education post-2015 and take note of the findings of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report and the Regional EFA Synthesis Reports. We recognize the important contribution of the Global Education First Initiative as well as the role of governments and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in galvanizing political commitment for education.
4. Having taken stock of progress made towards the EFA goals since 2000 and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the lessons learned, and having examined the remaining challenges and deliberated on the proposed 2030 education agenda and the Framework for Action as well as on future priorities and strategies for its achievement, we adopt this Declaration.

Towards 2030: a new vision for education

5. Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs. We commit with a sense of urgency to a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no one behind. This new vision is fully captured by the proposed SDG 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and its corresponding targets. It is transformative and universal, attends to the 'unfinished business' of the EFA agenda and the education-related MDGs, and addresses global and national education challenges. It is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability. We

reaffirm that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development. We recognize education as key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication. We will focus our efforts on access, equity and inclusion, quality and learning outcomes, within a lifelong learning approach.

6. Motivated by our significant achievements in expanding **access** to education over the last 15 years, we will ensure the provision of 12 years of free, publicly funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes. We also encourage the provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education and that all children have access to quality early childhood development, care and education. We also commit to providing meaningful education and training opportunities for the large population of out-of-school children and adolescents, who require immediate, targeted and sustained action ensuring that all children are in school and are learning.
7. **Inclusion and equity** in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.
8. We recognize the importance of **gender equality** in achieving the right to education for all. We are therefore committed to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments; mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools.
9. We commit to **quality** education and to improving learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. We will ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems. Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED). In this regard, we strongly support the implementation of the Global Action Programme on ESD launched at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya in 2014. We also stress the importance of human rights education and training in order to achieve the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.
10. We commit to promoting quality **lifelong learning opportunities** for all, in all settings and at all levels of education. This includes equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and higher education and research, with due attention to quality assurance. In addition, the provision of flexible learning pathways, as well as the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education, is important. We further commit to ensuring that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire life skills, and that they are provided with adult learning, education and training opportunities. We are also committed to strengthening science, technology and innovation. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be harnessed to strengthen education systems, knowledge dissemination, information access, quality and effective learning, and more effective service provision.
11. Furthermore, we note with serious concern that, today, a large proportion of the world's out-of-school population lives in conflict-affected areas, and that crises, violence and attacks on education institutions, natural disasters and pandemics continue to disrupt education and development globally. We commit to developing more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in these contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees. We highlight the need for education to be delivered in safe, supportive and secure learning environments free from

violence. We recommend a sufficient crisis response, from emergency response through to recovery and rebuilding; better coordinated national, regional and global responses; and capacity development for comprehensive risk reduction and mitigation to ensure that education is maintained during situations of conflict, emergency, post-conflict and early recovery.

Implementing our common agenda

12. We reaffirm that the fundamental responsibility for successfully implementing this agenda lies with governments. We are determined to establish legal and policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency as well as participatory governance and coordinated partnerships at all levels and across sectors, and to uphold the right to participation of all stakeholders.
13. We call for strong global and regional collaboration, cooperation, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the education agenda based on data collection, analysis and reporting at the country level, within the framework of regional entities, mechanisms and strategies.
14. We recognize that the success of the 2030 education agenda requires sound policies and planning as well as efficient implementation arrangements. It is also clear that the aspirations encompassed in the proposed SDG 4 cannot be realized without a significant and well-targeted increase in financing, particularly in those countries furthest from achieving quality education for all at all levels. We therefore are determined to increase public spending on education in accordance with country context, and urge adherence to the international and regional benchmarks of allocating efficiently at least 4 - 6% of Gross Domestic Product and/or at least 15 - 20% of total public expenditure to education.
15. Noting the importance of development cooperation in complementing investments by governments, we call upon developed countries, traditional and emerging donors, middle income countries and international financing mechanisms to increase funding to education and to support the implementation of the agenda according to countries' needs and priorities. We recognize that the fulfilment of all commitments related to official development assistance (ODA) is crucial, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA to developing countries. In accordance with their commitments, we urge those developed countries that have not yet done so to make additional concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for ODA to developing countries. We also commit to increase our support to the least developed countries. We further recognize the importance of unlocking all potential resources to support the right to education. We recommend improving aid effectiveness through better coordination and harmonization, and prioritizing financing and aid to neglected sub-sectors and low income countries. We also recommend significantly increasing support for education in humanitarian and protracted crises. We welcome the Oslo Summit on Education for Development (July 2015) and call on the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa to support the proposed SDG 4.
16. We call on the WEF 2015 co-convenors, and in particular UNESCO, as well as on all partners, to individually and collectively support countries in implementing the 2030 education agenda, by providing technical advice, national capacity development and financial support based on their respective mandates and comparative advantages, and building on complementarity. To this end, we entrust UNESCO, in consultation with Member States, the WEF 2015 co-convenors and other partners, to develop an appropriate global coordination mechanism. Recognizing the Global Partnership for Education as a multi-stakeholder financing platform for education to support the implementation of the agenda according to the needs and priorities of the countries, we recommend that it be part of this future global coordination mechanism.
17. We further entrust UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, to continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate the 2030 education agenda, in particular by: undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment; facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and standard setting; monitoring progress towards the education targets; convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide the implementation of the agenda; and functioning as a focal point for education within the overall SDG coordination architecture.

18. We resolve to develop comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation systems in order to generate sound evidence for policy formulation and the management of education systems as well as to ensure accountability. We further request the WEF 2015 co-convenors and partners to support capacity development in data collection, analysis and reporting at the country level. Countries should seek to improve the quality, levels of disaggregation and timeliness of reporting to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. We also request that the Education for All Global Monitoring Report be continued as an independent Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR), hosted and published by UNESCO, as the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the proposed SDG 4 and on education in the other proposed SDGs, within the mechanism to be established to monitor and review the implementation of the proposed SDGs.
19. We have discussed and agreed upon the essential elements of the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Taking into account the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (New York, September 2015) and the outcomes of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, July 2015), a final version will be presented for adoption and launched at a special high-level meeting to be organized alongside the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2015. We are fully committed to its implementation after its adoption, to inspire and guide countries and partners to ensure that our agenda is achieved.
20. Building on the legacy of Jomtien and Dakar, this Incheon Declaration is an historic commitment by all of us to transform lives through a new vision for education, with bold and innovative actions, to reach our ambitious goal by 2030.

2015 NGO Forum DECLARATION

Incheon, Republic of Korea

18-19 May 2015

Towards the right to inclusive quality public education and lifelong learning beyond 2015

1. We, the representatives of national, regional and international non-governmental and civil society organisations from different parts of the world have gathered at the NGO Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 18th to 19th May 2015. The Forum has been held ahead of the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015, scheduled to take place in Incheon from 19th to 21st May 2015, to prepare for our active participation and effective engagement.
2. We have taken note of the status of Education for All (EFA) based on the 2015 Global Monitoring Report, complemented by independent EFA assessments, discussed the contributions of civil society on EFA since Dakar in 2000, reviewed the status of the post-2015 process and analysed the WEF 2015 Draft declaration and Framework for Action. Following our deliberations over the past two days, we have adopted this statement, which reflects the aspirations of civil society organizations as we set our eyes on Education 2030.
3. We re-affirm that education is a fundamental human right and a public good that is key to promoting social, economic and environmental justice. States have the duty to provide free quality public education and lifelong learning for all and to ensure the right to education is enshrined in law and enforceable. We are however alarmed that today, 121 million children and adolescents are still out of school, with major inequalities in terms of access and quality. At least 781 million adults are denied the right to literacy, two-thirds of them being women. To address these and other challenges, the post-2015 education agenda must be rights-based, universal, holistic and within a lifelong learning perspective, drawing on lessons from the past, fully addressing the unachieved EFA goals and ensuring greater ambition to prepare young people and adults for life and to meet the challenges of the 21st century.
4. We welcome the WEF 2015 **Draft Declaration and Framework for Action** (FFA) on the assumption that the fundamental content will remain unchanged, that there will be no regression from the current human rights perspective and degree of ambition of the targets, and that the recommendations in this Declaration are taken on board.
5. We furthermore expect that the education goal and targets will remain integrated as part of the United Nations **Sustainable Development Goals** to be adopted in September 2015, thus recognising the critical role of education for social, economic and environmental justice and the indivisibility of human rights. We support the recommendation of the co-facilitators of the New York intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 agenda that where 'x%' is used in the adult literacy, skills and teacher targets, these should be replaced by 'all'.
6. We agree that the goal to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' should stand as our collective vision for the post-2015 agenda. To this end, we call for the commitment to twelve years of free, publicly-funded formal quality education for all by 2030, nine of which should be compulsory. We furthermore call for early childhood care and education (ECCE) from birth to school entry age to be progressively free. We reaffirm the right to progressively free and public quality higher education and vocational education and training. Each country should set clear benchmarks and milestones to outline how they will achieve this.

7. We need more attention to be placed on what the commitment to **lifelong learning** really means. It is an approach that is transformative, a commitment to a vision of learning that starts from birth and extends throughout life, and encompasses quality formal, non-formal and informal learning, recognising all people from children, youth and adults to older people as rights-holders. The foundation lies in early childhood care and education, which is essential both for promoting well-being and for enhancing social cohesion and national development. ECCE must be holistic and comprehensive, respecting the unique characteristics of young children and ensuring that all reach their full potential. Similarly, adult literacy and education policies and programmes must be prioritised and publicly funded, appropriate to adulthood and designed with learners, focussing on empowerment. Achieving lifelong learning further requires that all barriers to progression through different cycles of education are eliminated, including the recognition of prior informal and formal learning.
8. We reiterate our call for ensuring that **access, equity** and **quality** are addressed together for all ages, within and outside formal education settings. Special emphasis should be given to the inclusion of those marginalised by gender, race, language, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, sexual orientation, health status, geographical location, refugee or migrant status, socio-economic status, age, emergency, or man-made disaster and conflict, among others. We recognise that women and girls from marginalised groups face additional, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. States and organisations should never separate access and equity from quality, including in conflict-affected and disaster-prone areas. Indeed, the central challenge that most education systems face is to ensure equity in the quality of education, ending segregation and stratified systems that exacerbate inequalities. Whilst ensuring quality for all, education systems must celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity, resisting the drive towards standardisation which may undermine diversity. Particular emphasis should be placed on out-of-school children and youth, including those who live in conflict-affected states, in providing education opportunities, as well as creating pathways to reengage them in the formal system. We support the commitment that no target be considered met unless met for all.
9. **Quality education** extends beyond literacy and numeracy by encompassing the acquisition of a broad set of knowledge, skills and values, as well as fostering critical thinking, creativity, solidarity, dialogue and problem solving. It is rooted in fulfilling and inclusive learning experiences, requiring safe, secure and inclusive learning environments, motivated and valued teachers, high quality materials as well as relevant, broad curricula that encompass human rights education, education for sustainable development and global citizenship education. Quality education values individual, cultural and linguistic diversity, strengthens democracy and promotes peace. The learning process must be based on a learner centred approach.
10. Central to the achievement of all education targets, equity, quality education and learning for all are **teachers** who are well trained, professionally qualified and valued, and receive decent remuneration no less than that of professionals with comparable qualifications in the public service and/or the private sector. Governments should increase investment in teacher education and the provision of continuous professional development and support, ensuring gender sensitive recruitment and training. They need to create decent and attractive working conditions for all teachers, education support personnel and educational leaders. Teacher organisations need to be respected and recognised as independent and legitimate actors. They need to be centrally involved in all social dialogue concerning education policies, salaries and conditions of service, and this should be guaranteed through legislation. Given its centrality, the teacher target should have a more immediate deadline of 2020.
11. Whilst supportive of the FFA as a whole, we are deeply concerned by the narrow range of **indicators** in its annex. To achieve the goal, we strongly recommend that national and regional indicators show a progressive narrowing of the gaps in access and in achievement between the richest 20 % and poorest 40 %, measured each five years. We need to have a more ambitious and holistic set of indicators, both universal and thematic, which are consistent with existing human rights obligations and in line with the content and spirit of the goal and the full set of education targets. Particular attention is needed to ensure that there are diverse indicators for quality education that recognise and track inputs, processes and a wide spectrum of outcomes. In relation to learning, the focus should also be on strengthening formative assessment which can help to guide practical improvement, rather than an over-emphasis on internationally standardised tests and comparisons. There should be a clear recognition that setting

indicators is a political, not purely technical, act and that final approval of thematic indicators must be subject to appropriate democratic oversight.

12. We welcome the recognition that **civil society participation** should be institutionalised and guaranteed in all processes as this is crucial to ensuring governments are held to account and achieving inclusive, quality education for all. Accountability, transparency and the importance of civil society's watchdog role, including expenditure-tracking, during the implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda must be underscored. We recommend that this explicitly includes all stakeholders including teachers unions, parents groups and representative student movements as well as NGOs, children and youth-led movements, communities, learners' organisations, disabled people's organisations, indigenous organisations, academic and research institutions, women's organisations and other social movements that represent excluded groups. These diverse actors should be meaningfully involved in all stages of policy dialogue, planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 education agenda. Furthermore, human rights can only be fulfilled in a context of democracy that recognises participation as a right in itself. To this end, we condemn, and call for an end to the discrimination, persecution and criminalisation of activists and civil society movements that we are presently witnessing across all continents and which jeopardises the fulfilment of the right to education.
13. We are deeply concerned and also strongly condemn the continued threat to the right to education due to the rising incidents of **attacks and violence** in and around educational institutions, leading to casualties among students and personnel. In addition, school-related, gender-based violence needs to be recognised as a significant barrier to education, particularly for girls. More attention needs to be paid to addressing the root causes of conflict and violence. It is an outrage that many governments are disproportionately investing in the military and/or increasing their military expenditure more rapidly than their education expenditure. Education systems, both formal and non-formal, should promote a culture of peace, intercultural understanding, harmony and tolerance, in order to overcome all forms of conflict at all levels.
14. The post-2015 education agenda cannot be achieved without **adequate financing**. We therefore call for the following:
 - a. National governments should absolutely adhere to international benchmarks for ensuring increased domestic financing for education, by allocating at least 6% of the GDP and at least 20% of the national budget to education. The use of a range of 1.5-20% and 4-6% as it currently stands in the FFA dilutes this essential benchmark.
 - b. More attention needs to be paid to expanding the domestic resource base. Whilst we welcome the FFA's references to expanding the tax base and challenging harmful tax incentives, we need to oppose not just tax evasion but aggressive tax avoidance, which, though technically legal, can be immoral in denying countries the funds needed for delivering on the right to education. We join the call for an empowered intergovernmental body on tax which is mandated to set tax rules and empowered to enforce these rules – as a key step to ending the abuse of tax havens.
 - c. Donors should commit to clear targets - whether doubling of aid to basic education or ensuring that at least 10% of aid is spent on basic education. The Dakar pledge on financing needs to be boldly reasserted in Incheon and delivered on in the coming years. Donors need to prioritise their aid to low-income countries and fragile and conflict affected countries. Aid to education in humanitarian contexts needs to be at least doubled from the low base of 2% to 4%. Furthermore, debt cancellation in favour of education should be re-emphasised.
 - d. Governments and donors should prioritise spending on achieving the goal and targets for the most marginalised communities. Increased spending on equity improves quality of life for everyone.
 - e. The Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa must come up with a comprehensive framework for financing the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. We call on governments and all partners to ensure that the Addis Ababa outcome document has a commitment to financing the education goal and all of its targets, with the specific minimum benchmarks for domestic financing and external support described in paragraph 14 (a) and (c) above.

- f. The Global Partnership for Education should align fully its strategic plan and financing mechanisms to the collectively agreed education goal and targets. It should support countries to develop comprehensive education sector plans and should avoid creating parallel goals, objectives or targets.
 - g. Clearer commitments are needed to ensure all public money (including aid) is spent on public education and does not support or subsidise for-profit provision in any way. Private sector contributions to the education sector should aim to reinforce greater public investment in education and research rather than to replace the role of national governments. We therefore reaffirm education as a public good and reject calls for increased privatisation or commercialisation in education, including any support for low fee private schools and for-profit universities. Equally we oppose any trade agreements that include education as a commodity and facilitate liberalisation of education services and loss of rights, as in the case of the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA). We also call on all governments to put in place stronger regulation of private provision of education to prevent abuse, fragmentation and increasing inequity.
15. We support the need to improve **monitoring and evaluation** of progress at all levels and the push for a data revolution, especially in ensuring that disaggregated data is transparently available to all in order to inform education policy and practice. The biggest challenges lie in strengthening national systems and capacity-building in qualitative and quantitative data collection as well as meaningful and effective analysis. This needs to be given priority over aspirations for internationally comparable data. There needs to be a huge effort to track the extent to which all equity gaps in education are reduced.
16. We recognise the crucial role played by **UNESCO** as the mandated UN agency for education and we urge the continuation of an inclusive, democratic process and education architecture which engages Member States, relevant UN agencies and civil society. This partnership is crucial to success. As civil society we value the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) and the composition of the EFA Steering Committee, which includes civil society representation.
17. We, the representatives of national, regional and international non-governmental and civil society organisations from different parts of the world **are committed** to work and cooperate with governments and a wide range of groups, individuals and institutions to reach our goal to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. In particular we commit to:
- a. Continue engagement and dialogue with UNESCO at all levels, and other key stakeholders, in articulating the education agenda within the UN sustainable development agenda, in particular at the World Education Forum;
 - b. Engage all governments at local, regional and central level to fulfill their commitment to implement the 2030 education agenda and Framework for Action;
 - c. Increase our advocacy for education both within and outside of the education community and hold States and donors accountable for meeting their obligations;
 - d. Foster the active engagement of families, children, youth, students, teachers and communities, especially those most marginalised, so that their voices are heard in agenda-setting, policymaking and implementation;
 - e. Disseminate this outcome document throughout the CCNGO/EFA membership and the broader civil society at national, regional and international levels;
 - f. Disseminate the Declaration from the World Education Forum 2015 and the 'Education 2030' Framework for Action.
18. Together, we need to continue to make a compelling case that education is at the heart of the post-2015 agenda, facilitating achievement of all other SDGs. The new global compact on development requires a new generation of active global citizens of all ages in all countries, developing and sharing the attitudes, knowledge and behaviours which are essential for a sustainable planet. To achieve dignity and social and environmental justice, we need inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all.



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