

**Communiqué of *The International Conference on Teachers for EFA in Africa: Collaborative Action to address the teacher gap***

Nairobi, Kenya January 19 – 20, 2011

**Preamble**

We, the participants of the International Conference on “Teachers for EFA in Africa: Collaborative Action to address the teacher gap”, held from 19-20 January 2011 in Nairobi at the initiative of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, with the support of the European Commission and in cooperation with the Government of Kenya, recognizing the urgency to tackle one of the most pressing but least addressed issue that holds back education for all: adequate number of teachers of quality, adopt the present communiqué.

Ranging from teachers, school leaders, to ministers of education, academics to policy makers, teacher union representatives to stakeholders coming from over twenty-five countries in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Latin America; as well as representatives of donor agencies, intergovernmental, international non-governmental and regional organizations, we further recognize the abiding relevance of the outcomes and Declaration of the Oslo High Level Group meeting (December 2008). We also take into account the outcomes document of the United Nations MDG Summit (September 2010), as well as the debates and outcomes of this conference.

On the current education situation, we noted the remarkable progress made in many African countries, which have accelerated in the past decade, efforts towards universal primary education (UPE). Despite all the efforts, the majority of African nations are still far from achieving the EFA objectives particularly on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), secondary education, the learning needs of all young people and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs, non-formal education and educational quality. In Africa, 32 million children are not in school. Furthermore 1 adult out of 4 is illiterate, 3 out of 4 being women. The main excluded groups are those living in rural areas, ethnic minorities, and indigenous populations, the poor and marginalized groups. The current economic downturn may widen the gap in access, equity and quality between developed and developing countries as well as within countries.

*We focused on solutions over the two days of the Conference and collectively, we have agreed upon a set of recommendations. We call upon leaders, stakeholders and change-makers in our countries, and beyond, to recognize that teachers and educators are an essential part of the solution to EFA by considering, building upon and adopting these recommendations.*

**General**

1. Encourage all governments, particularly in Africa, to keep up the momentum on providing quality education for all children and particularly for marginalized groups and girls, through continued commitment to secure sufficient financing and through implementation of necessary reforms with a systemic approach.
2. Invite all stakeholders to recognize that the EFA goals can only be reached when sufficient numbers of qualified teachers are employed, appropriately deployed, motivated and retained.

3. Encourage at national level the convening of an *Indaba*<sup>1</sup> (social dialogue or inclusive policy dialogue with a holistic approach, particularly on the financing gap) on the teacher issue and education financing, which could be initiated by government, teacher unions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or other partners, depending on the situation in the country. The *Indaba* would bring together various government organs, particularly ministries of education and finance, donors, non-governmental organizations, teachers' unions, civil society and other stakeholders to openly discuss education financing and teacher issues, with a view to finding a commonly agreed solution and strategy for action.

### **The Funding gap**

4. Governments, particularly in Africa, and the international community should hold to their commitment to EFA and ensure increased budget allocations to the education sector, which should be monitored and tracked adequately.

5. Countries should maximize the impact of available national funds for teaching i.e. by making full use of cost studies, projections and simulations. Attention should be given to expanding Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to increase the sectoral internal efficiency of primary and secondary education.

### **The Capacity gap**

6. Governments and stakeholders should ensure a lifelong learning approach to teacher training and development through more coherent, comprehensive and cost-effective measures, bearing in mind the limited funding available. Solid baseline data and analysis are required. It is important to have capacity development measures with an inter-sectoral approach, targeting all levels of education and all stakeholders.

### **The Policy gap**

7. Governments, working together with other stakeholders, including teachers through their representative organizations, should develop a comprehensive national teacher policy covering all levels and forms of education, and addressing teacher education and training, certification, recruitment, deployment, retention and conditions of service including a clear career path. Such teacher policy should be in line with the general education policy in the country, and should be regularly evaluated.

### **Non-civil servant teachers**

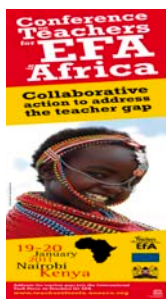
8. It is also necessary to improve conditions of service and engagement and establish minimum standards for teacher recruitment and training. International organizations and civil society organizations should work in partnership with governments to develop and implement policy frameworks that gradually integrate contract teachers through teacher training, continuous professional development and absorption into the public service.

### **The gender perspective**

9. Governments should ensure systemic gender sensitization and integration, with the support of a variety of partners, to achieve gender equality. This implies addressing training, pedagogy, curriculum, leadership, interactions and resource allocation, in a gender sensitive way.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *indaba* is derived from African indigenous languages in Southern Africa and refers to an inclusive social dialogue process used by traditional and other communities to find common/agreed solutions to challenges confronting society. In an *indaba* everyone has a voice and the process is designed to lead to a common mind or solution everyone can identify with and support to ensure successful implementation.



## ECCE

10. Investments of domestic resources to education should give higher priority to ECCE and its workforce, including the implementation of ECCE policies and strategic plans, which should be included in national teacher training plans.

## Equity

11. Governments and employers should strive for equity in teacher recruitment and deployment, ensuring that rural, post-conflict areas (where applicable) and other hard to reach areas are staffed with qualified teachers including in mother tongue languages.

*The conference reaffirmed the core role of teachers in reaching the EFA goals with equity of access and educational quality.*

## The centrality of teachers

1. Education should be at the heart of the development agenda and teachers should be at the heart of the education agenda.
2. The key challenge in Africa towards progress to EFA is the severe shortage of qualified teachers in the region. In fact, 2.1 million primary school teachers should have been recruited between 2008 and 2015 to bridge the teacher gap. In addition, a significant number of teachers at the pre primary and post primary school levels should be recruited. The need is even greater when the massive deployment of teachers with insufficient training is taken into account.
3. Addressing this challenge is as imperative and urgent for African countries as it is for the international community. It demands that we meet our collective commitments and agreed upon six wide-ranging education goals to be met by 2015 (Dakar Framework for Action, Dakar, 2000). Our ability to realize the goals of EFA is dependent upon our ability to address the worldwide shortage of teachers. For African states this means to demonstrate their political will through more favorable budgetary allocations prioritizing education, especially by adhering to the benchmark of at least 6% of GNP and 20% of public expenditure in line with the recommendations of the Oslo High Level Group meeting (2008). For development partners, it means honoring the pledges previously made to the education sector to fill the financing gap (Dakar Framework for Action, Dakar, 2000) and to increase official development assistance (ODA) according to the Doha declaration on financing for development (2009).
4. We call on governments and the development partners to make all efforts to ensure equity and relevance including through appropriate financial and educational support to better target those from poor and marginalized communities, and who are still excluded from education, with quality teachers for good learning outcomes.

## Strategic choices for access, equity and quality

5. Beyond the mobilization of new financial resources both internally and externally, the Conference stressed the importance of action focused research and analysis to develop innovative knowledge which will inform key strategic choices, relevant policy reforms and the strengthening of technical and institutional capacities. It is along these new and creative lines

that more cost effective solutions may be initiated and championed, and latent resources for education mobilized.

6. In that perspective and beyond the numbers of teachers to be recruited and deployed, we insist on the efforts and investments to be accorded to the professionalization and the motivation of teachers. These are key factors to teachers' performance and for successful learning for all.
7. We highlight the importance of putting in place comprehensive professional development linking pre-service training with in-service training, the promotion of transformational leadership in schools, teaching communities, resource centers and the systematic use of ICTs.
8. We stress the need to enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession by improving teachers' working conditions and ensuring respect for teachers' rights.
9. Teachers should be given a voice in governance, policy development and implementation, and should have a career progression path.
10. Furthermore, there is need for policies that support the transition of teachers from training to posts in schools. This will require new dynamics, particularly induction and mentoring, as well as strengthening of the links between higher education and research institutions and schools. It calls for partnerships and concerted action at national, regional and international levels to ensure the quality and sustainability of the education systems. This should also include South-South and North-South-South cooperation.
11. We recognize the multiple and diverse challenges facing the teaching profession. This requires a systemic and multi-sectoral approach as proposed for example by UNESCO's TTISSA (Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa) program as well as ILO's policy framework based on the existing international recommendations concerning teachers. Comprehensive teacher policies (including both civil and non-civil servant teachers) should therefore be developed in consultation with various stakeholders, particularly by means of institutionalized social dialogue between authorities and teachers' organizations. Lessons learnt from post-conflict situations illustrate the need to designate schools as safe sanctuaries for teachers, students and communities. In addition, countries emerging from conflict should take this as an opportunity for comprehensive system reconstruction and strengthening of educational policy taking full advantage of the role of schools and teachers in promoting peace and security within communities.
12. To speed up progress towards these objectives, and to keep teacher issues high on the agenda of national governments, inter-governmental organizations, donors, non-governmental organizations and other partners, we call for the strengthening of the Teacher Task Force and the active involvement of its members in its activities, including sharing of knowledge, policy dialogue, partnerships and networks, coordination and synergy of actions at the international level.