



Global Education for All Meeting

UNESCO, Muscat, Oman
12 – 14 May 2014



2014 GEM Final Statement *The Muscat Agreement*

Preamble

1. We, Ministers, heads of delegations, leading officials of multilateral and bilateral organizations, and senior representatives of civil society and private sector organizations, have gathered at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO in Muscat, Oman, from 12 - 14 May 2014, for the Global Education for All (EFA) Meeting. We thank the Sultanate of Oman for having hosted this important event.
2. Recalling the GEM 2012 Final Statement, we take note of the 2013/14 EFA Global Monitoring Report, the regional EFA reports, the Resolution of the 37th session of UNESCO's General Conference on Education Beyond 2015, the Decision of the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 194th session and the Joint Proposal of the EFA Steering Committee on Education Post-2015.

Status of EFA

3. We acknowledge that the worldwide movement for Education for All, initiated in Jomtien in 1990 and reaffirmed in Dakar in 2000, has been the most important commitment to education in recent decades and has helped to drive significant progress in education. Yet we recognize that the Education for All (EFA) agenda and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are unlikely to be achieved by 2015, and acknowledge the continued relevance of the EFA agenda. More than 57 million children and 69 million adolescents still do not have access to effective basic education. In 2011, an estimated 774 million adults, of whom almost two-thirds were women, were illiterate. Non-completion of formal schooling, insufficient levels of basic skills acquisition, and the quality and relevance of education are of key concern. At least 250 million children are not able to read, write or count well even after having spent at least four years in school. We note with concern that there are persistent inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes at all levels of education, particularly for the most vulnerable groups and minorities. Gender inequality is of particular concern, as only 60% of countries had achieved gender parity at the primary level and 38% at the secondary level by 2011. We also note that the inadequacy of financial resources has seriously undermined progress towards providing quality education for all.

4. We further note with concern the increasing violence and attacks against children and personnel within the education institutions. Therefore, protecting education from attack must be an integral part of the post-2015 education agenda.
5. We acknowledge that future education development priorities must reflect the significant socio-economic and demographic transformations that have occurred since the adoption of the EFA goals and the MDGs, and the changing requirements in the type and level of knowledge, skills and competencies for knowledge-based economies. Therefore, we recognize that there is a strong need for a new and forward-looking education agenda that completes unfinished business while going beyond the current goals in terms of depth and scope, as well as to provide people with the understanding, competencies and values they require to address the many challenges that our societies and economies are facing.

Vision, principles and scope of the post-2015 education agenda

6. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right for every person. It is an essential condition for human fulfilment, peace, sustainable development, economic growth, decent work, gender equality and responsible global citizenship. Furthermore, it contributes to the reduction of inequalities and the eradication of poverty by bequeathing the conditions and generating the opportunities for just, inclusive and sustainable societies. Therefore, education must be placed at the heart of the global development agenda.
7. The post-2015 education agenda should be clearly defined, aspirational, transformative, balanced and holistic, and an integral part of the broader international development framework. It should be of universal relevance and mobilize all stakeholders in all countries. Education must be a stand-alone goal in the broader post-2015 development agenda and should be framed by a comprehensive overarching goal, with measurable global targets and related indicators. In addition, education must be integrated into other development goals.
8. We affirm that the post-2015 education agenda should be rights-based and reflect a perspective based on equity and inclusion, with particular attention to gender equality and to overcoming all forms of discrimination in and through education. It must support free and compulsory basic education. It should expand the vision of access for all to reflect relevant learning outcomes through the provision of quality education at all levels, from early childhood to higher education, in safe and healthy environments. It should take a holistic and lifelong learning approach, and provide multiple pathways of learning using innovative methods and information and communication technologies. Through governments, the state is the custodian of quality education as a public good, recognizing the contribution of civil society, communities, families, learners and other stakeholders to education. The post-2015 education agenda must be flexible enough to allow for diversity in governance structures. It must continue to promote sustainable development and active and effective global and local citizenship, contribute to strengthening democracy and peace, and foster respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.
9. We stress that the full realization of the post-2015 education agenda will require a strong commitment by both governments and donors to allocate adequate, equitable and efficient financing to education. This must be accompanied by strengthened participatory governance, civil society participation and accountability mechanisms at the global, national and local levels, as well as improved planning, monitoring and reporting mechanisms and processes. It will also require coordinated partnerships at country level.

Overarching Goal and Global Targets

10. We support “Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030” as the overarching goal of the post-2015 education agenda.

11. We further support the translation of this goal into the following global targets, for which minimum global benchmarks and relevant indicators will be identified/developed:

Target 1: By 2030, at least x% of girls and boys are ready for primary school through participation in quality early childhood care and education, including at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 2: By 2030, all girls and boys complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least 9 years and achieve relevant learning outcomes, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 3: By 2030, all youth and at least x% of adults reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to fully participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women and the most marginalized.

Target 4: By 2030, at least x% of youth and y% of adults have the knowledge and skills for decent work and life through technical and vocational, upper secondary and tertiary education and training, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 5: By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies, including through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Target 6: By 2030, all governments ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers.

Target 7: By 2030, all countries allocate at least 4-6% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or at least 15-20% of their public expenditure to education, prioritizing groups most in need; and strengthen financial cooperation for education, prioritizing countries most in need.

Next steps

12. We strongly support UNESCO’s leadership and coordination in facilitating the development of the post-2015 education agenda in collaboration with the EFA partners. We encourage UNESCO to continue facilitating the debate and to consult Member States and key stakeholders in the further development and refinement of the overarching goal and global targets and the identification of corresponding indicators, as well as the development of a Framework for Action to guide the implementation of the future agenda. In addition to global targets, country-specific targets and indicators should also be developed, reflecting the diverse social, political, economic and cultural contexts.

13. We commit to using this Statement as a reference for the negotiations in the global consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, in order to ensure that this latter has a strong education component. To this end, we ask the Director-General of UNESCO to share this document with all Member States of UNESCO, the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), the co-chairs of the Open Working Group, the Committee on Sustainable Development Finance as well as key stakeholders.

14. We further commit to using this Statement for ongoing national, regional and global consultations on the post-2015 education agenda, to be approved at the World Education Forum 2015, which will be hosted by the Republic of Korea in May 2015. Our expectation is that this will be an integral part of the global development agenda to be adopted at the UN Summit in New York City in September 2015.
15. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to achieve the EFA goals and ensure education for all citizens. We commit to promoting, advocating for and supporting the development of a strong future education agenda, and urge all UNESCO Member States and stakeholders to actively participate in the process leading to its establishment and implementation.
16. Every effort will be made to ensure coherence between what is agreed in September 2015 at the High-level UN Summit as part of the global development agenda with the post-2015 education agenda approved at the WEF 2015 in the Republic of Korea in May 2015.