

## EDUCATION FOR ALL

*Calling Higher Education to a Higher Calling*

The United States, UNESCO and Education for All  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, D.C.



# CALLING HIGHER EDUCATION TO A HIGHER CALLING

*A Conference Hosted by Georgetown University and the  
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*

FEBRUARY 28, 2005 • WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## **PART I**

### **OPENING ADDRESSES**

CALLING HIGHER EDUCATION TO A HIGHER CALLING—a landmark conference sponsored by Georgetown University and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)—took place on February 28, 2005, on the campus of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Key representatives of the sponsoring organizations opened the conference with brief addresses to set the stage for the day-long event.

**Pravin Rajan**

*President, Georgetown University Student Association*

**John J. DeGioia**

*President, Georgetown University*

**Koïchiro Matsuura**

*Director-General, UNESCO*

**Laura Bush**

*First Lady of the United States*

**Margaret Spellings**

*Secretary of Education*



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## Opening Addresses

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### PRAVIN RAJAN

*President, Georgetown University Student Association*

In awarding the Pope John XXIII Peace Prize to UNESCO in 1974, His Holiness Pope Paul VI observed that the organization makes “education, science, and culture weighty elements of surprising importance for the spiritual and universal fusion of peoples.” As a former student of President DeGioia, I have seen firsthand his passion to engage that critical challenge of fusing the horizons of people in the developed and developing worlds. I believe this challenge to be a moral imperative for our community to embody—through action—our shared values of learning, faith, and freedom.

All students share a belief in education, and Georgetown University’s partnership today with UNESCO and its support of Education for All offers us exciting opportunities and possibilities that will grow well beyond today’s historic beginning. I am excited and honored to be here today and grateful to all of you for joining me in welcoming Georgetown University’s forty-eighth president, Dr. John J. DeGioia.

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## Opening Addresses

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**JOHN J. DEGIOIA**  
*President, Georgetown University*

**M**rs. Bush, Director-General Matsuura, Secretary Spellings, distinguished guests, it is a great privilege to welcome you to Georgetown.

We are deeply honored that this is the third visit to our campus by First Lady Laura Bush. With each visit, Mrs. Bush has challenged and inspired us with her deep commitment to the possibilities of education. In July 2001 at Georgetown, she convened a White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development that focused on new research into the way infants learn and how to help parents and caregivers prepare children for lifelong learning.

None of us will ever forget the warmth of her message to the 2003 graduating class of our School of Nursing and Health Studies. Today, she helps us engage the nation's academic community in UNESCO's Education for All initiative. Mrs. Bush, thank you for your love of education and your belief in its power to change the world.

We are very pleased to welcome Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. During President Bush's first term, she served as the president's senior advisor on domestic policy, with responsibility for education policies, and was instrumental in passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. Her efforts won her respect on both sides of the political aisle.

Secretary Spellings also brings the perspective of an informed consumer to her duties. She is the first mother of school-age children to serve as U.S. Education Secretary. Madam Secretary, we at Georgetown look forward to opportunities to work with you during the next four years.

Let me also welcome to Georgetown the college and university presidents; educators and scholars; researchers; leaders in nonprofit, cultural, and development communities; and others who join us for today's historic conference, which is made possible with the support and sponsorship of the Verizon Foundation. The experience and wisdom collected in this hall today is humbling, even for a university.

We also have some younger guests with us—seventh- and eighth-grade students from Washington Jesuit Academy and from Ronald H. Brown Middle School. The students from Brown take part in a multiyear program, involving Georgetown students, faculty, and staff members, that helps to prepare the students for college. We also welcome youngsters from our DC Reads initiative along with their Georgetown tutors. Through DC Reads, hundreds of Georgetown students are trained in literacy instruction to help first- through third-graders reach grade-level proficiency in reading. The program is very popular with youngsters and their parents and with our own students.

It would be challenging indeed to find anyone who would contest the importance of education in individual lives and in the well-being of our societies. Yet primary education is a fairly recent concept, historically speaking.

In the late nineteenth century, only about half of all American children were enrolled in school. Education was the privilege of the wealthy, until reformers such as Horace Mann convinced the public of education's broad salutary effect on society. By the end of the century, free public elementary education was available for all children, although it was another twenty years before attendance was legally mandated.

The evolution of elementary and secondary education in this country is the legacy of academics such as Booker T. Washington, John Dewey, and William Heard Kilpatrick. For well over a century, American colleges and universities have prepared teachers and have advanced pedagogical theory while American scholars have contributed to our understanding of human growth and development and have conducted groundbreaking research into issues related to literacy.

Today, we stand on the threshold of the next frontier of primary education—the global initiative to ensure that every child in every nation can attend school. To help achieve this extraordinary goal, we invite the engagement of America’s scholars and educators, its learned societies, and, most certainly, its colleges and universities.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1818, “If the condition of man is to be progressively ameliorated, as we fondly hope and believe, education is to be the chief instrument in effecting it.” If we wish for all humankind the benefits of education, including the access it provides to economic self-sufficiency, then we share a moral and ethical imperative to help remove roadblocks to universal primary education.

Leadership for this great endeavor comes from UNESCO—the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization—whose evocative mission is “to build peace in the minds of men.” Under the banner of UNESCO, more than 160 countries have embraced the initiative known as Education for All (EFA). Initial goals were defined in 1990 by participants at the World Conference on Education for All in Thailand. Ten years later, delegates to the World Education Forum in Senegal committed their governments to achieve quality basic education for all by 2015. Each nation has pledged to achieve specific national goals with respect to access to education, reduction of illiteracy, instructional quality, and gender equity.

Universal education is so important that it is included as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of development priorities articulated by all 191 member states of the

United Nations. The MDGs have focused attention on fundamental human needs and the responsibilities and roles of both rich and poor countries to address these needs.

Global initiatives like the MDGs and Education for All are inspiring governments, donors, and civil society to mobilize resources to address global development needs in ways that earlier generations could have never conceived.

The challenges we face are substantial. More than 800 million people around the world—about one in five individuals—cannot read and write. More than 103 million children are not attending school. We will hear more about the challenges from Director-General Matsuura. This conference is our opportunity to discuss the contribution we as educators can make in such divergent realms as research, teacher training, information technology, policy development, public health, support for EFA flagship projects, and much more. I encourage you all to return to this hall this afternoon for our concluding plenary session where we will discuss the ideas that emerge today.

Let me say a few words about our theme: calling higher education to a higher calling. More specifically, let me address the question “How do colleges and universities like our own respond to the reality of global inequity, whether in terms of poverty or education?”

Our institutions enjoy all the benefits of a networked global economy. Georgetown, for example, has 145,000 alumni on seven continents; members of our faculty are conducting research in 44 countries; our students come from 137 nations. More than half of those students will study abroad during their college years. We are 216 years old, the oldest Catholic and Jesuit university in the United States, and are located in the capital of the world’s single superpower.

Contrast our reality with the heartbreaking facts of inequality around the globe. Three billion people—nearly half the world—live on less than \$2 a day. More than one-third of the world—2.4 billion people—do not have access to adequate sanitation.

I believe that institutions like our own have a responsibility to educate our students about the reality of lives far different than their own. I am grateful for the example set by Georgetown faculty members such as Phyllis Magrab of our Medical Center who directs the Center for Child and Human Development and who has been involved in the Education for All effort since its beginning. Two members of our faculty, Tony Arend and Carol Lancaster, are providing leadership here at Georgetown in examining how universities can play a role in responding to the challenge of meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

This spring, I have the privilege of teaching a course, Ethics and Global Development, with Professor Lancaster who also advises UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on New Partnerships for Africa's Development. Our class is here today to share in this opportunity to hear Mrs. Bush, Secretary Spellings, and Director-General Matsuura.

Through this range of activities, our intent is to ensure that we provide our students with a far richer understanding of the world than has been possible for any generation in history. We also seek to support our faculty in their research and scholarship and to ensure that we as a community can play a role in responding to the urgent challenges of our day.

In 1999, Koïchiro Matsuura was appointed to a six-year term as director-general of UNESCO. Born in Tokyo, he studied law at the University of Tokyo and economics at Haverford College. His distinguished career in diplomatic service includes five years as Japan's ambassador to France, service as the deputy minister for foreign affairs, and as chairperson of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee.

The dynamic changes he has implemented at UNESCO have invigorated the UN agency. While much of his focus has been directed to the Education for All initiative, he has oversight for other critical endeavors, including the establishment of a global tsunami warning system in the wake of the tsunami that devastated nine countries surrounding the Indian Ocean in December.

Director-General, we are honored that you join us today as we engage America's higher education community with the urgent work of UNESCO. I know that this engagement is critical if we are to achieve the goals of Education for All. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Koïchiro Matsuura.



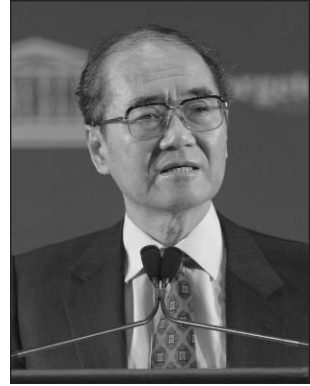
WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY SUSAN STERNER

Laura Bush delivers remarks during the United States, UNESCO and Education for All Conference at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Monday, Feb. 28, 2005.

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## Opening Addresses

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### KOÏCHIRO MATSUURA

*Director-General, UNESCO*

It is a great honor and pleasure to be with you here today. As the cohost of this one-day conference, let me join with President DeGioia in welcoming each and all of you. Allow me also to express my sincere thanks to President DeGioia for the kind remarks in his opening address. It has been a pleasure to work closely with Georgetown University in organizing this conference. We very much appreciate the warm hospitality we have received.

It is a signal honor that our meeting will be addressed by the two leading women on the educational landscape of the United States today, First Lady Laura Bush and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. I look forward very much to the thoughts you will share with us this morning.

Just a short time ago, the three elements in the title of this conference—The United States, UNESCO, and Education for All—would have made an unlikely triangle. But the return of the United States to membership in UNESCO after a gap of nearly two decades has made a world of difference because it brought back true universality to the organization. Since rejoining UNESCO, the United States has entered seriously and purposefully into our work in many fields. Much of the credit for this effort is owed to Ambassador Louise Oliver, whose vigorous and constructive engagement with key issues and processes has been outstanding and influential. Like the

United Nations as a whole, UNESCO needs the United States because we know that, with its support, expertise, and encouragement, we can do so much more to fulfill our mandate.

Today, we will discuss the important role that colleges and universities in the United States can play in achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA), a challenge that is at the very heart of UNESCO's work. The conference will also explore how the higher education community can work with the private sector toward achieving EFA. Knowing that different aspects of EFA will be further developed during the meeting, I will give you a general overview of what EFA is about, what UNESCO's role in EFA consists of, and how we are trying to extend the partnership base of EFA.

Sixty years ago, the "founding fathers" who wrote the UNESCO Constitution had the wisdom and foresight to include in its preamble a provision whereby the signatory states affirm their belief in "full and equal opportunities for education for all."

The current world focus on EFA dates from the World Education Conference held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, which highlighted that the universal right to education was not enjoyed by millions of children and adults around the world. Ten years after Jomtien, in spite of notable progress in some countries toward achieving universal primary education and adult literacy, the World Education Forum held in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, found that many countries were still far from achieving EFA. The 181 governments participating in the Forum adopted a Framework for Action that emphasized the need for quality basic education and universal access to it. The Dakar Forum set six goals for achieving Education for All by 2015 and outlined a strategy for achieving them.

EFA is focused on basic education, which embraces the following: early childhood care and education; universal primary education of good quality for all children—boys and girls; learning and life-skills programs for all young people and adults; literacy programs,

especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; gender equality in education, including the removal of gender disparities in primary and secondary education; and efforts to improve all aspects of the quality of education.

It is clearly an ambitious agenda and yet, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, it is at once shameful and astonishing that so many children, young people, and adults have few or no educational opportunities. According to current estimates, about 800 million adults, two-thirds of them women, have no command of basic literacy skills. More than 103 million school-age children are out of school, surely destined to join the ranks of the non-literate. And for many of those who do manage to gain access to education, it is often low in quality and bestows no enduring level of literacy skills or other accomplishments. Basic education, furthermore, is riven by gender disparities and other dimensions of disadvantage, usually linked to poverty and marginalization.

As things stand, the world is not on track to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. Only eighty-three countries, together covering slightly more than one-third of the world's population, have already achieved the goals of universal primary education, gender parity, and literacy—or have a high chance of doing so by 2015. If current trends continue unchanged, without significant new policy interventions, a further twenty-eight countries, accounting for 28 percent of the world's population, are not on track to achieve any of these three goals. Two-thirds of those countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, but they also include countries such as India and Pakistan. By current trends, seventy-nine countries will not be able to meet the Dakar goal of halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2015.

But the enormity of the challenge must not be allowed to daunt us. Progress is possible, and in many countries, real progress is being made.

The primary responsibility for achieving EFA lies with national governments. At the forum in Dakar, all countries committed

themselves to developing national plans for education for all and to boosting investment in basic education; in return, the international community made the significant commitment that “no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.” In effect, EFA is a global educational compact.

UNESCO’s EFA mandate, as entrusted to the organization at the Dakar forum in 2000, embodies a dual commitment. UNESCO’s role is to coordinate EFA partners and maintain their collaborative momentum as well as to refocus its program to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work. How best to implement this dual commitment has been a continuing challenge for UNESCO in the five years since the Dakar conference. Today, EFA not only is the main priority of UNESCO’s Education Sector, with about 80 percent of its budget dedicated to EFA, but also is the principal priority of the whole organization.

UNESCO is also responsible for monitoring progress toward the six EFA goals. UNESCO annually publishes an *EFA Global Monitoring Report* that is produced by an independent team of experts hosted by UNESCO. The theme of the next report, which will be launched in November 2005, will be literacy.

Each year, I convene a High-Level Group on EFA that serves as a lever for political commitment as well as for mobilization of technical and financial resources. The High-Level Group, which next meets in Beijing, China, in November 2005, is composed of four key EFA constituencies: first, the governments of developing countries, typically represented by ministers of education; second, bilateral development partners or donors such as USAID; third, UN agencies and other international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank; and fourth, civil society organizations such as leading international, regional, or national NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), including the Global Campaign for Education, the main organizer of EFA Action Week. By the way, EFA Action Week

this year (in the week beginning April 25) will focus on education to end poverty and empower women, under the slogan “Send my friend to school.”

Note should also be made of two United Nations decades on education, one on literacy (2003-12) and the other on education for sustainable development (2005-14), for both of which UNESCO is responsible for international coordination. Tomorrow, in fact, I shall launch the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development at UN headquarters in New York.

UNESCO’s own programmatic thrusts are being channeled through three new initiatives: the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), the Teacher Training in Sub-Saharan Africa Initiative, and the Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education.

UNESCO is also actively seeking to broaden and deepen the partnerships and alliances within the EFA movement by bringing in new or under-represented partners. A case in point is the private sector. For example, a round table, “Development-Driven Public-Private Partnerships in Basic Education,” was organized by the Davos World Economic Forum and UNESCO at the High-Level Group meeting in Brasilia in November 2004. The second round table will be held in Paris in April 2005, which I will open. This initiative is a promising avenue for establishing regular dialogue and cooperation between the more traditional EFA stakeholders and the business community.

I am very pleased that one of the breakout panels this afternoon is dedicated to the theme “How the private sector can partner with universities to help achieve EFA.” This evening, let me add, I shall be attending the UNESCO and Business Dinner organized by the Committee for Economic Development (CED). This event will be a marvelous opportunity for dialogue between UNESCO and key representatives of the U.S. private sector.

This conference is an important opportunity for UNESCO and the American higher education community to renew their acquaintance. I firmly believe that we have many areas of common interest, but I am particularly pleased that this first major rendezvous between us is focused on EFA, which is, by far and away, the highest priority on the world's education agenda.

The key outcome I seek is your commitment, expressed in actions and programs, to help developing countries overcome the obstacles they face in the area of basic education. I believe that the vibrant civil society of the United States—the only superpower, a country that has built its progress on educational foundations—can do more, much more, to help less fortunate countries achieve their educational goals.

Education is the new frontier, and it is global in scope. EFA needs your help. The children without schools or teachers need your help. The women who cannot read and write need your help. The young people without skills and qualifications need your help.

Therefore, I call on your assistance and expertise; your partnership and networking; your energy and dynamism; and your enhanced and sustained support for the sake of those who live on the frontiers of ignorance, poverty, and despair. You can help in so many ways—in teacher education and training, in conducting and sharing the benefits of educational research, in linking up with sister institutions in poorer countries, and in projects to help HIV/AIDS orphans or the victims of natural disasters. So much needs to be done to achieve the EFA goals, and, believe me, the world needs the help of the United States and its people.

I hope that, through today's meeting, you will find out more about how UNESCO and other EFA partners can help you engage with the EFA challenge. Naturally, I would be delighted if, as a consequence of this meeting, the relations between UNESCO and American universities and colleges were to deepen and develop

around the theme of EFA. But my main interest is less self-interested. What I really wish is that the American higher education community takes the global challenge of EFA to its heart. UNESCO stands ready to facilitate this process of engagement.

It is my great privilege and pleasure to introduce this morning the opening keynote speaker, Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States. It was a very proud moment for my organization when, in September 2003, Mrs. Bush joined us in Paris to mark the return of the United States to membership in UNESCO. Mrs. Bush clearly has a strong commitment to education, and I think that this commitment has deep roots in her love of children, her love of books, and her passionate belief in the power of learning to change lives for the better. UNESCO, the specialized United Nations agency for education, recognizes a kindred spirit in the first lady. Her national reading initiative Ready to Read, Ready to Learn, her promotion of teacher recruitment, her support for education campaigns to combat breast cancer and heart disease, her international role as the UNESCO Honorary Ambassador for the Decade of Literacy, and her other actions and involvements reveal her to be a true leader in the field of education. Mrs. Bush, we are most honored by your presence here today. I am now delighted to call on you to deliver your opening keynote address.

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## Opening Addresses

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**LAURA BUSH**  
*First Lady of the United States*

**T**hank you very much, Director-General Matsuura. I have enjoyed our meetings in Paris and New York. And now I am very happy to welcome you to Washington, D.C. President DeGioia, thank you for hosting this conference at Georgetown University and for inspiring your colleagues in higher education to make UNESCO's mission part of their own. I am so pleased to share the stage with Secretary Margaret Spellings. Margaret and I are longtime friends who share a passion for making sure every child receives the very best education. And she is doing a great job as America's new Education Secretary. And congratulations to Pravin Rajan, who can now be called "Mr. President" since his election to the leadership of the Georgetown University Student Association.

Ambassador Louise Oliver is also here. Thank you, Ambassador. Thank you for your leadership on your country's behalf at UNESCO. It might be a tough job, but for a mom who has raised five children, dealing with 189 countries is probably a piece of cake.

Thank you also to Marguerite Sullivan, the new head of the U.N.-U.S. National Commission to UNESCO. And special thanks to Dr. Phyllis Magrab for arranging this great conference for all of us. Thank you, Dr. Magrab.

Our topic today, Education for All, concerns political leaders and community leaders worldwide. Last week, when President Bush and

I were in Europe, Doris Schröder, the wife of German Chancellor Schröder, hosted a roundtable discussion with authors, journalists, and book publishers to discuss how we can foster early reading habits and get children away from the TV screen and in front of a book. Mrs. Schröder is the honorary chairman of Germany Reads, which is designed to encourage everyone in a child's life—parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles—to read to children early and often.

Mrs. Schröder knew that I am always eager to talk about books and learning, and as President DeGioia mentioned, I had the privilege of coming to Georgetown to discuss education issues before. This very hall was the site of a summit on early childhood cognitive development in 2001. We brought together researchers with expertise in child development to explore the best ways to help young children develop the skills they will need to learn how to read. We will continue to share the findings of that conference with people around our country and, with UNESCO's help now, around the world.

In all countries, no matter how prosperous, there are pockets of need—children who need attention and a caring person to show them the way to a better life. Earlier this month, President Bush announced a nationwide effort called Helping America's Youth. We are reaching out to young people in our country, with a particular emphasis on boys—because the statistics on boys are alarming. Boys begin to fall behind girls in elementary school. In fact, nearly 70 percent of children in special education classes are boys. In high school, boys fall even further behind. More girls than boys go on to college in the United States and earn degrees. Boys are more likely than girls to commit crimes or to be victims of violent crimes. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that more than 90 percent of gang members in the United States are boys. And by age eighteen, boys are seventeen times more likely than girls to be in jail or prison.

You can imagine, then, how much more dramatic the problem is in other parts of the world, where conflict has left thousands of former child soldiers with no schools to attend or productive ways to spend

their time. Many others have been orphaned by war or disease. One observer from the field described these children as, and I quote, “masses and masses of youth roaming around” like “a ticking time bomb.” It is a problem we must address. How can we help children turn toward a future of real possibility of success? We all know that the answer begins with education.

UNESCO members and partners are helping millions of children realize the advantages of education. UNESCO’s goal of Education for All is to make primary education universal and available to every child in every country by 2015. America is eager to contribute to this work. The United States rejoined UNESCO seventeen months ago. And I am pleased to serve as the Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Decade of Literacy.

UNESCO figures show—and you have already heard this information from both of the previous speakers—that more than 800 million people worldwide cannot read a simple book or write a basic sentence. Two-thirds of these people are women, and of course, many of these are mothers. Overcoming the problem requires research into the best way to teach reading, as well as great teachers who will help every child learn to read. And of course, solving the problem also requires support from governments and partners in civil society.

I have spent a lot of time in classrooms in America and around the world, and I have watched children’s eyes light up as they read to me. An educated child is better equipped to handle all the challenges of life, from finding work to avoiding diseases like HIV/AIDS. Research tells us that a child’s ability to thrive is closely linked with his mother’s education level, which is why mother and child literacy should be at the heart of our efforts to increase literacy around the world. Our mothers are our first teachers. They introduce us to the joys of reading and learning. From them, we learn lessons that will influence us throughout our lives.

Research shows us that children who are read to from a very early age are more likely to begin reading themselves at an early age. They are more likely to excel in school. They are more likely to graduate from secondary school and go to college. By reading to a young child, a mother helps that child develop language. She teaches him how to hold a book and follow words. She also links books and reading with the safety and the comfort of a mother's arms and a mother's voice. Many of the brilliant and ambitious young people who come to you from higher education started their journey with parents who read to them and who taught them to love the written word.

The value of literacy goes beyond books. A mother who can read also knows how to follow the instructions on a bottle of medicine. She can read the label on a food container. She can read a newspaper and learn about the world around her. She can conduct basic business transactions and know whether she is getting a fair deal. And she has more options for helping to support her family. Literacy is a significant first step toward building a better life. And maternal literacy can be a significant step toward a better life for the whole family.

UNESCO is engaged in this work around the world, helping women like Pampay Usman. Pampay joined us in New York, at the launch of the Decade of Literacy. Growing up in the Philippines, Pampay did not have the opportunity to go to school. And yet, although she could not read or write, she managed a small market. So you can see how hard and frustrating her work was; because she could not write down the name of her customers or the goods they brought, she had to remember their faces and every item they purchased. The day Pampay joined an adult literacy class in her village, her life changed forever. She learned how to write her name and address. She learned how to read prices on groceries, and her business grew. Pampay said, "Literacy brings trust and confidence in my life." Even the smallest gains can make a huge difference in the life of a person in the developing world. And governments around the world are heeding this call.

In Oman, national leaders have made education a top priority. Dr. Rawya bint Saud al-Busaidi is the Education Minister in Oman—the first woman on the Arabian Peninsula to head a government ministry. A UNICEF report showed that literacy rates among Oman’s women increased from 38 percent in 1990 to 62 percent in 2000. Over the same decade, the rate for men rose from 67 percent to 80 percent.

In Iraq, UNESCO has distributed nearly 9 million new math and science textbooks, free from Baathist propaganda, to Iraqi schoolchildren. The books were produced by Iraqi printing companies, providing jobs for the Iraqi people and helping the local economy.

Throughout the broader Middle East and North Africa, the United States is working with our G8 partners and regional ministers to broaden literacy, to expand education—especially for women and girls—and to promote skills training that meets the needs of local people. Ministers have set a goal of cutting the region’s illiteracy rates in half by 2015, and they are committed to working together to achieve that goal.

In Madagascar, where one in three children is not in school and one in three adults cannot read or write, UNESCO and other U.N. organizations worked to open 260 learning centers in the poorest provinces. One report described “children, mothers with babies in their arms, teenage girls showing just how keen they are to learn.” One of those eager children was a twelve-year-old boy named Jocelyn, who showed off his reading skills to his parents and said, “I hope these courses won’t stop. I want to continue to learn.”

In America, we make schools a national priority. Our federal, state, and local governments invest more than \$500 billion a year to provide education to every child. And as we are meeting here today, the National Governor’s Association is meeting. The states’ governors have committed to improving high schools in their states. Yet around

the world, school is a luxury, often unavailable to children. UNESCO reports that more than 100 million school-age children do not attend school. In some developing nations, schools have been devastated by war or ethnic violence. In many countries, particularly in Africa, the HIV/AIDS crisis has decimated the teaching profession. Children who have been orphaned by AIDS have watched their teachers and other adults in their lives also fall victim to the disease. UNESCO estimates that, by the year 2015, we will need 30 million highly qualified new teachers around the world.

The scope of the problem of illiteracy and the magnitude of the worldwide teacher shortage may seem staggering. But we are already hard at work to overcome them, and as we search for the best methods of expanding literacy and training teachers, we must keep our minds open to new ideas. All of the ideas put into practice must also be put to the test. Resources, time, and energy should be spent wisely and effectively. And when programs work, they can be highlighted and replicated.

Reach Out and Read is a national literacy program in America that puts literacy squarely in the center of child development. When babies and mothers see a doctor on a well-child visit, the doctor gives the child a book—a new picture book that is age appropriate, which means that, for babies, they might need to be chewable. The doctor talks to the mother about the importance of reading aloud. Mothers learn that reading with young children, starting as early as six months, is important to foster healthy growth and development.

More than 2,000 hospitals and clinics in the United States have Reach Out and Read programs. Adaptations of the program are also flourishing in Italy, in Great Britain, and in Australia. Evidence shows that Reach Out and Read works, that parents who participate read to their children more often, that parents and children have more positive attitudes toward books and reading, and that the language skills of young children improve when their families get books and advice from their doctors.

In the developing world, the benefits could be even greater. Books designed to help children read could also help mothers who are striving to improve their own reading skills. When we work with mothers and children in literacy programs, we can help two generations at once.

Educational research has made great strides in the past two decades. We now have a better understanding of how people at different stages of life—young children, teenagers, and adults—respond to different methods of teaching. The United States is investing in educational research that is already improving our success in teaching people to read. We are eager to share the benefits of this research with UNESCO and with educators around the world as well as to learn from research that has been done in other countries.

With research and resources and decades of expertise, American universities are important partners in UNESCO's work, and I am glad that many college and university leaders have joined us here today. Our higher education institutions are respected throughout the world, and they attract some of the brightest minds in the world. With so much respect across the globe, American colleges and universities have an opportunity to help UNESCO meet its goals of advancing literacy, training teachers, and using education and science to fight HIV/AIDS.

UNESCO's University Twinning, or UNITWIN, program gives American colleges the chance to partner with a college in the developing world. These partnerships could involve sending faculty abroad or setting up whole departments in another country. They could involve sharing world-class research in disease prevention with local scientists, or starting a program to let student teachers improve their skills in African classrooms, or working with a library in the Middle East. The UNESCO Chair program is another way to improve life in the developing world. In the past year, UNESCO awarded chairs to the University of Rhode Island and Rutgers University to preserve coastlines and to manage critical water supplies.

The University of Nebraska in Omaha brings women from Afghanistan to their campus to train as teachers. I have met with every class of students in the program, which is cosponsored by the U.S. Department of State. The women come to Omaha for five weeks of seminars, observation, and training techniques that concentrate on needs specific to Afghan schools. Graduates of the program go back home to their classrooms and put the lessons they have learned into practice. They also pass on the lessons to other teachers, extending the benefits of the program far beyond the number of people who are able to come to the university here and learn directly.

Paula Nirschel, whose husband is the president of Roger Williams University, founded an initiative to educate Afghan women. Paula contacted colleges and universities throughout America and encouraged them to provide full scholarships—including room and board—to women from Afghanistan who want to come to the United States to study. In the third year of the program, there are twelve students at campuses across America. Paula hopes to have eight more students next year. Her goal is to provide an education for these women so they can return home to serve as academic and personal role models to the people of their country. Last year, I invited Paula to the G8 summit in Georgia to speak to the spouses of world leaders. I wanted to share Paula's success with women who can use her ideas in their own countries.

Meanwhile, Paula's husband, Roy Nirschel, recently announced that Roger Williams is partnering with Basra University in Iraq. The university is providing textbooks and equipment to the school, and next year, it will host a professor from Basra University. One Iraqi professor who accompanied a group of students to Roger Williams and to Harvard this month was asked to compare classrooms in American universities with classrooms in Iraq. He said, "Our blackboards are missing. No TV, forget that. I can't recall any teacher having a desk at the front. And sometimes there aren't enough chairs for everybody."

Those needs exist around the world, and American colleges and universities can help meet them. I have had the pleasure of talking with Director-General Matsuura many times, and I know that he is always looking for new ideas to strengthen and enrich the organization he serves. Making connections with colleges in other countries also will provide unique opportunities for American students to become more connected to the global community and to develop skills and perspectives that will increase their chances in public service, in business, in engineering, and in many other fields.

Georgetown has reached out to the world through its School of Foreign Service for eighty-five years. Now, as the United States is more engaged than ever before in Africa, in the Middle East, in Asia, and in South America, we look to schools like this one for graduates who have the training to work in developing nations and to bring needed help to people. Improved teacher education programs will ensure that highly qualified teachers are prepared to teach in schools that are in desperate need. Increased language instruction will allow students and graduates to be a vital link between indigenous cultures and the wider world, to be a voice for children and communities at risk of being left behind.

The United States is proud to join 189 other UNESCO members in the mission of making education a reality for all the world's people. And with your help, we can promote literacy and train teachers. We can help millions of boys and girls go from a life of hardship to a life of opportunity. And we will make the world a more peaceful and hopeful place for every mother and every child.

Thank you all very, very much.

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## Opening Addresses

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**MARGARET SPELLINGS**  
*Secretary of Education*

As the First Lady said, we strongly support UNESCO’s mission to provide Education for All. Education and literacy are necessities in a world devoid of certainty but abundant with opportunity. Lives can be transformed—lifted over time from poverty and chaos to dignity and independence. Education offers a ladder on which to climb and a foundation on which to stand.

Fifty-two years ago, Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to a group of parents and teachers about the promise of the United Nations. “I think we will hand on to our children a struggle,” she said. “But [it is] a struggle that will give our nation the capacity to lead the world toward peace and righteousness and freedom.” Learning and literacy will take us forward to that future. And I want to thank UNESCO for helping to lead the way.

We can all agree on the goals of Education for All. They include “universal primary education by 2015,” a 50 percent expansion in adult literacy, improved quality and access, gender equality, and opportunity for “excluded and marginalized” populations. Those objectives have special resonance to Americans in light of our own education reform effort, No Child Left Behind. The goals of that effort—every child learning at grade level in reading and math by 2014, a quality teacher in every classroom, and special attention for students once ignored and left behind—complement UNESCO’s good work.

Our system of education had grown complacent over the years, allowing some students to graduate without the basic skills they needed. By testing children annually and by holding schools accountable for their progress, we are seeing real changes in the classroom. We are reaching more youth at an earlier stage, helping them before they fall too far behind. And we are reaching their parents too, giving them more information about their schools and more choices if they are dissatisfied.

No Child Left Behind also stresses the importance of sound, science-based research. As the first lady noted, thanks to recent advances in neuroscience, we now know more—and with more certainty—about how the brain works and how children learn to read. We have invested billions of dollars behind scientifically proven instruction, teacher training, and the addition of “reading coaches” in our classrooms.

The investment is making a real difference; across the country, test scores in reading are on the rise, with the greatest gains shown by disadvantaged and minority students.

We also have established new research-based programs in math and science. Overall, President Bush has increased funding for education research by 60 percent. We do not yet know where the research may lead, but we are eager to share our findings with the world. Educational access—filling an empty chair with a willing student—is necessary, but not sufficient. We must insist on quality; UNESCO’s *2005 Global Monitoring Report* demonstrated its importance. Children must leave school with the skills to survive and thrive in a knowledge-based world.

Sound research is crucial for another reason: to demonstrate the value of education. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics report, *Financing Education—Investments and Returns*, shows the strong link between education and economic growth in developing nations. Attendance in school significantly increases one’s earning power and access to the labor market. This finding is especially true for women.

In this knowledge-based world, earning depends on learning. Education helps both people and nations rise above their circumstances. A study by the University of Ottawa found that a rise of just 1 percent in a nation's literacy scores yielded a 2.5 percent increase in labor productivity and a 1.5 percent increase in GDP per person. Those raw numbers mean a real improvement in quality of life.

The study found that in the countries where skills improved the fastest between generations, productivity also improved much faster than average. It might surprise you to learn that the United States had one of the world's lowest improvement rates. We knew we had to act. And we did. As a result, today, our youngest students are gaining vital literacy skills at an earlier age. Our fourth- and eighth-graders have significantly improved their performance in international tests. The achievement gap between rich and poor as well as that between Black and White are finally beginning to close.

Our secondary school students, however, continue to lag behind. The president is seeking to expand the promise of No Child Left Behind to our high schools. We want to make a high school diploma a ticket to success in the twenty-first century, whether a graduate chooses higher education or the workforce. We owe it to our citizens and to our shared future.

Other nations realize the importance of education and are taking action. For example, my Australian counterpart, Education Minister Dr. Brendan Nelson, has introduced reforms that emphasize testing and accountability.

In this knowledge economy, it is critical that students enrolling in colleges and universities be ready to learn from day one. As Bill Gates said, the "barrier of not being prepared for college" is every bit as real as financial barriers. We must remove that barrier. This obstacle is compounded by declining student interest in science and engineering—which is ironic because demand for technology has never been higher.

If we improve student preparation, we can spur student interest. President Bush's budget provides unprecedented support for rigorous, college-track curricula and advanced placement classes in our high schools. The nation's governors are behind us in this effort.

Across the world, progress has been made. In the nations surveyed by the *Financing Education* report, time spent in school had more than doubled since 1960, from 3.4 years to 7.6 years. However, that increased time is still almost three years fewer than the time students spend in school in the major industrialized nations. To close this gap further, we must continue to push for universal primary education—not just for the elite, but for all.

We also must confront other barriers to education—war and conflict, disease and disaster. On their visit to Thailand this month, former Presidents Bush and Clinton were greeted by groups of schoolchildren who survived the tsunami—but lost their mothers or fathers. The United States is helping to lead the worldwide effort to rebuild devastated communities and schools in areas hit by the tsunami. The current President Bush is seeking nearly \$1 billion for reconstruction and rehabilitation, including targeted aid for sparsely populated rural areas. If successful, the effort would be the most generous U.S. government response ever to a foreign natural disaster.

At the same time, UNESCO is focusing on longer-term needs, including post-trauma psychological assistance, teacher training, disaster prevention curricula, and access for students with disabilities. We stand behind them as they strive to meet those needs.

Elsewhere, democratic societies and institutions are emerging after decades of tyranny and fear. In Iraq and Afghanistan, schools that once excluded girls and that taught propaganda and hatred to boys are adapting to freedom. Across the world, HIV/AIDS has taken a terrible toll on students, teachers, and families. In Africa, more than one child in ten has lost a parent to the disease.

Our administration has committed more than \$2 billion for Afghanistan's development, including newly built schools and clinics. Our America's Fund for Afghan Children has tapped into the generosity of the American people to fund vaccinations, uniforms for schoolgirls, and thousands of chests filled with school supplies. The first lady deserves our special thanks for helping to lead those efforts.

Finally, the president has more than tripled funding since 2001 to fight AIDS. His \$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, announced two years ago, is providing prevention and therapy, care for mothers and orphans, and modernization of health-care infrastructure.

Many of those efforts were once dismissed as unachievable—like the dream of Education for All. But for millions of people, dreams are coming true. Today, 100 million more children attend school than in 1990, the year Education for All began.

We cannot let up. We still have much work to do to reach the millions of children still denied access to school—and to teach the more than 800 million adults, one in seven worldwide, who still cannot read and write.

I believe our higher education community is ready to make a real difference. You are our greatest ambassadors to the world. Half a million foreign students come to our colleges and universities each year to study. They return home, passing on their knowledge and experiences to their families and countries. Many become leaders in their nations.

Georgetown University is doing its part. In 2000, it attended the World Education Forum in Dakar where the principles of Education for All were updated and renewed. You at Georgetown have surveyed donor contributions and examined nations' education plans. You have led teacher-training workshops in Africa and Central Europe. And you play an important role in training America's future diplomats and corporate expatriates through your School of Foreign Service.

You are not alone. DePaul University was the first to negotiate a partnership with UNESCO in 2003. The University of Rhode Island and Rutgers University each have science-based UNESCO chairs. The University of Minnesota is working on cultural preservation with the World Heritage Center. There are other examples—and more yet to come.

We want to encourage more colleges and universities to apply their research to real-world challenges. We want to see new partnerships formed among nations, the business community, and nongovernmental organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The more people are behind this effort, the more people in need we can help.

In the end, we are not looking to fill a press release or a fact sheet. That is not how we measure success. We measure success by the gleam in a young girl's eyes as she learns how to spell or by the intensity of a young boy so lost in his studies that he momentarily forgets his troubles. We measure success by places such as Bokgoni Technical High School in Pretoria, South Africa. This UNESCO-affiliated school suffers terribly from poverty and AIDS; a teacher says that “sometimes we have three deaths a week.” And yet its students visit local AIDS orphans and donate food and uniforms to those in even greater need.

Yes, this success is about learning how to read and write and do math. But it is also about learning how to respect one another and resolve our conflicts peacefully. Multiplied by millions, such changes will lead to a more peaceful, prosperous, and free world.

Founding father James Madison spoke of the bonds between “liberty and learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual and surest support.” It is no less true today.

In Director-General Matsuura's words, literacy “enables [people] to make choices, to participate and to exercise their rights—in other words, to be free.” Like freedom, a quality education for all is worth fighting for. We are grateful to UNESCO, Georgetown University, and everyone else who is engaging in this struggle for the future. Thank you.





**PART II**  
**EDUCATION FOR ALL PLENARY PANEL**  
*EFA and the Higher Education Community*  
*Teaching, Research, Networks*

**Introductory Remarks**

Louise Oliver, *Ambassador and U.S. Permanent Delegate to UNESCO*

**Remarks by the EFA Plenary Panel Facilitator**

Peter Smith, *Assistant Director-General and  
Education Designate, UNESCO*

**Overview of EFA**

Ann-Therese N'dong Jatta,  
*Director of Basic Education, UNESCO*

**Supporting EFA in Fast Track Countries**

Robert Prouty, *Lead Education Specialist, World Bank*

**EFA and Higher Education's Social Compact**

Andrea Leskes, *Vice President for Education and Quality Initiatives,  
Association of American Colleges and Universities*

**EFA and the Flagship Initiative**

Phyllis Magrab, *Professor of Pediatrics, Georgetown University*



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## Introductory Remarks

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### LOUISE OLIVER

*Ambassador and U.S. Permanent Delegate to UNESCO*

I would like to welcome you this morning to this panel discussion, IEFA and the Higher Education Community: Teaching, Research, and Networks. For me, being back on a university campus is a wonderful feeling. I grew up at Yale University. I feel comfortable in a university environment. Nothing is more fun for me than sitting and listening to scholars, intellectuals, and others discuss interesting ideas and debate. In fact, sitting in the back of the room where you are is where I would really like to be.

I am a parent of five children, which means that I have more than a professional interest in education. I also have a personal interest in education. Like many parents, I was actively and intimately involved not only in the issue of literacy but also in actually teaching children how to read.

Sometimes when we talk about an idea such as literacy in a detached way, we forget what it actually means. Literacy involves sitting down and teaching a boy, a girl, a child, or an adult how to read. I did this actively five times. Each time was different. With one or two of my children, the effort was so easy that I simply could not understand why it was a problem to teach a child how to read. With others, it was impossible. We went on and on—the sound of the letter *h*, the sound of the letter *a*, the sound of the letter *t*, that means *hat*—and five minutes later, gone.

So literacy is an interesting process, but with all of my children, the really exciting moment came when they suddenly put it together. They saw the letters, the scrawls, the things that were in front of them. They put together the sound with the word and, suddenly, h-a-t meant *hat*. At this moment of recognition, this moment when the brain came together and said “This is what it means,” at that point, the eyes lit up and the learners were on their way. This moment of recognition is the gift, the gift that we have to give to children around the world.

Now I should add that three of my five children are boys. So I listened very carefully to our first lady as she talked about the problem with boys. We all know boys are different. With my sons, after they had learned how to read, we ran into the problem of television, and television began to do its magic thing. So I had to think what to do with those boys, how to keep them on the right track. I came up with an idea. I called them in and said, “I have a deal for you. You will have to choose. Either you can come to me and tell me what television show you want to watch and I will either approve it or not, or you can watch unlimited TV, as much as you want, as long as every minute of TV is balanced by a minute of reading.” They had to think about this deal.

They went off, discussed it with one other, and came back. They chose number two; they would watch unlimited TV, and they would balance every minute of TV by reading. And, of course, what happened? They read nonstop. They read in the cars. They read in the halls. They read when they walked. They read during meals. They read constantly because, after all, if you wanted to watch an hour show, you had to read for 60 minutes.

This strategy actually was tremendously successful because the power of television influenced the situation, and they really started to read. And they read, and they read, and they read. Like many things, as you do more of something, you get better at it. Eventually, the system began to fall apart because we began to borrow minutes.

When you start to borrow minutes and you begin to remember how many minutes are owed to you, it falls apart. But by that time, the strategy had accomplished its purpose. They liked reading. You never know what is going to be your secret weapon, but for me, that strategy was it.

I am a tremendous believer in sound research. You do need good data in order to make good decisions. There is no question about that. In this country, we have done an extraordinary amount of work in creating good data on learning to read—and not only on learning to read but also on other things. We have a wealth of expertise and experience.

For example, at one of UNESCO's recent conferences, I learned about the launch of the international Year of Physics. Numerous Nobel Prize-winning physicists and others had come to UNESCO to talk about the advances in physics. One of the lecturers talked about this new water diffusion MRI technique that activates the molecules in the brain, which, in turn, allows researchers to really see the brain operating as it thinks, as it works, as it functions. This gentleman said that he and his colleagues had been doing all kinds of experiments, one of which was on two-month-old babies.

They taped mother's voice for a few minutes, and when they played this tape, going forward, in front of these two-month-old babies, they could see all parts of the babies' brains lighting up, reacting. When they played the same tape, same voice, but played it backward, nothing happened in the babies' brains. In other words, the brain really is hardwired for particular sounds. It perceives these sounds as a coherent set of sounds that, of course, underpin the learning of language.

Now we are here today at this very interesting conference to look at ways that the higher education community in the United States can help reinforce the work of UNESCO and can, we hope, help make serious progress toward the goals of the EFA, which are ambitious goals—very ambitious. When you hear that we are going to try to educate every child in every country around the world by 2015, you

say to yourself, “Maybe.” But the point is that it is good to have goals. It is good to have vision. It is good to have direction. It is good to make as much progress as we possibly can toward those goals because, as you have heard, those goals are critical.

Look at where the illiterate populations of the world live. They live in places like Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. They live in places of the world that are facing all kinds of other problems, including instability. President George W. Bush rejoined UNESCO because he knew that UNESCO’s mandates with respect to education, culture, science, information, and communications are critical in today’s world; they underpin everything that we are trying to do.

UNESCO is the organization within the UN system that has the primary responsibility for education. As you heard this morning, we are all so very fortunate at UNESCO to have the first lady, Mrs. Laura Bush, as the Honorary Ambassador for the decade of literacy. Her leadership is essential because we will not make great progress in countries facing these kinds of problems without political will.

She mentioned Oman. I was in Oman a couple of months ago as part of a trip the country organized for ambassadors at UNESCO. In Oman, unlike many countries, leaders realized—30 years ago when the current sultan took over—that the statistics on education in Oman were appallingly low, just appalling: only 6 percent, 7 percent, 8 percent of the population educated. In 1971, the leaders had to make a fundamental decision: What was going to be their number-one priority for development? Where would they put their efforts? Where would they put their resources?

They decided to make education the number-one priority. Now that decision takes a lot of understanding and wisdom because, in most cases, countries want to get right to the economic development. But you cannot effectively develop economically without an educated population. So Oman did it right. The leaders did it right. They

educated their people, and now they are on the road to rapid effective development. Political will is absolutely essential to make these programs succeed in education, and the first lady is going to play an extremely important role in this area.

The other essential ingredient for success in Education for All is having strong effective leadership for the education sector at UNESCO. Therefore, it is of great joy to all of us that the Director-General has hired an American, Dr. Peter Smith, to be the next assistant director-general for education at UNESCO. Dr. Smith is an inspired choice for this position because he is a man of boundless energy and enthusiasm. He is passionate about the role that education can play in changing people's lives. He is what I would describe as a clear-eyed optimist for whom nothing is impossible. In other words, he is a visionary who is also results oriented. It is important to have both vision and the drive for results. Leaders need to be inspired by the mission. Leaders also need to be results oriented so they do not get sidetracked by ideas that are unrealistic and unobtainable.

Dr. Smith is currently the president of California State University, Monterey Bay, an institution he helped start in 1995. We all know it is hard to run a university. It is even harder to start a university. His entrepreneurial qualities will serve him very well at UNESCO.

Before his work in California, he spent three years as a dean of the School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University here in Washington, D.C. So he knows how to be an administrator.

He is knowledgeable about issues in education, understands the need for data, does research, and has worked as a senior fellow at the American Council on Education and as the executive director of the National Commission on Responsibilities for Financing Post-Secondary Education. He knows what he is talking about. He has the expertise. He has the experience.

He is also a veteran of electoral politics at both the state and national levels, having served as a member of Congress for Vermont in 1989 and 1990, as lieutenant governor of Vermont from 1982 to 1986, and as a Vermont state senator from 1980 to 1982. Now having avoided electoral politics all of my life, I am impressed by those individuals who are willing to make themselves accountable to voters, which is not always a pleasant experience. He understands accountability, he understands constituencies, and he understands what it means to deliver.

His interest in local politics was mirrored by his interests in local education. He worked at Vermont State College, and he founded and was the first president of the Community College of Vermont, another entrepreneurial activity. He is a native of Vermont. He attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Princeton University, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

If anyone can help UNESCO achieve its ambitious goals in the field of education, it is Dr. Peter Smith because he has the experience, the expertise, and, most important, the passion and determination necessary for success. Please help me welcome UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, Dr. Peter Smith.

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## Remarks by the EFA Plenary Panel Facilitator

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**PETER SMITH**  
*Assistant Director-General and  
Education Designate, UNESCO*



Ambassador Oliver, I do not get that kind of an introduction often. And as you put it so nicely, as a veteran of elective politics, I came to expect less. When I left the Congress, which is a euphemism for getting beaten, I was in a meeting in Vermont where there was a fellow I had known all my life. If you are from a college or a small town, you might understand that you could know someone all your life, and that person might really not like you. And you might really not like that person very much. Such was the case with this fellow; he was thrilled I had lost. The experience of losing an election is a little bit like attending your own wake. You have to work for another two months before the person who beat you takes office; people still have needs, and roofs still need to be fixed, and all the rest of it. So there I am, going around Vermont. This fellow introduced me in the meeting—read my entire resume. And when he was done, he looked up with a huge smile and said, “It gives me great honor to introduce our congressman, Peter Smith, a man with a great future behind him.”

So I am delighted to have you focus on the future because I accept both the challenge and the opportunity of this job as the greatest good fortune, the greatest honor, that I could possibly be given at this stage in my life. As you hear from our panel this morning, you will understand more deeply the scope and the depth as well as the importance of the effort that lies before us.

What is at stake? At stake is one billion people—one billion people. You have heard it in data. You have seen it in charts. You have read it. There are one billion people at stake, and they are poor. Many of them are women. They are children. They are mothers.

I would tell you that this calling is not only a moral calling but also the deepest reflection of our understanding of what social justice means and can be about in this country. If I can grab neither your hearts and your consciences nor those of all the people who are not here today but are waiting to be or already engaged in this effort, then consider that it is in our fundamental self-interest that all children, and their mothers, and their fathers be able to read, be healthy, and be taught by good teachers. Any time the morality of the task, the justice of the task, and the self-interest of the task line up with one another, then, in fact, we know that we are about important work. Our job is nothing less than to take that one billion, that number, and turn it upside down in ten years.

There are those who say that this dream is too bold, too lofty—that the number is too large. This country and other successful societies are built on dreams. Dreams are not measured in terms of validity or depth, by whether or not they are achieved and, if so, in a specific period of time. We are as good as the questions we ask. We are as decent as the dreams we hold out, and we are judged by our peers and others in terms of the integrity and seriousness with which we pursue them. So do not let anybody talk you out of this dream by emphasizing numbers or rationality because the dream is about much, much more.

My plea and urging for all of you today—and the people that you represent because I represent UNESCO now—is that we do not want to be measured by the way we arrive in a country. We want to be measured by what we leave behind when that country's people have the power, the capacity, and the stability to live and work freely, largely on their own. That transfer is what matters, the respect that comes with asking and understanding that people want to be in

charge of their own lives. We are going to do it with literacy. We are going to do it with better teacher training. We are going to do it because we are going to keep people healthy, free—I hope soon—from HIV and AIDS.

We are talking about education for sustainable development—a new UN effort that is going to be announced—and you will hear me talk about it. You will hear me talk a lot on the fundamental relationship between what we do—with our convening and our capacity building and our collaboration at UNESCO—to remove the negatives of illiteracy and poor health and poor teaching to see a larger positive, which is stability, which is strength, and which is sustainable development for people and for societies and for countries. That change is fundamental for the future, peace, and harmony of this world.

Why is it so important? I see in my mind a huge table. I will call it a table of opportunity. My dream that lies behind Education for All is that there are as many seats at that table as there are people who want to advance to it. People do not have to stand in line. They do not have to wait for somebody to walk away. They do not have to wait for somebody to die. If a person is ready, there is room at that table.

Societies are successful and more stable when people can see forward to the future. I would call it having hope for the future, understanding how the future can be better for them and for their children and for their children's children. I would argue that as strong and as important as political systems are, societies in which the least of the people have hope are societies that are strong and poised for growth, for stability, and for decency. That table of opportunity needs to have a seat for every child, every mother, and every father in this world. And when it is there and they know it is there, then we will have a chance—a chance—at the kind of decent global society that we all dream of.

Now, to me, sustainable development involves multiple transfers. The first is the education of people, individuals, one person at a

time, who, as a result of that education, gain more control and more power over their lives. You know the data. You have read them, and you have heard the figures referred to today. Educated people behave differently as parents, differently as citizens, differently as economic beings, and differently as social beings in a larger society. And every time we take a step down that road, we move toward the decency and the stability that underlies our dream. The personal power translates inevitably to personal economic and societal economic power. That power, in turn, transfers to stability—to sustainable, predictable, intentional development.

Our job is to convene, to collaborate, to build capacity through EFA so countries, their ministries, their professionals, and their families can ultimately walk—on their own and with the help of their colleagues in a free association—down the path to that table of opportunity. The collaboration that we need internationally and regionally must be characterized by intentionality. It must be characterized by persistence, and it must be characterized by boldness.

There is no advantage for us to reproduce systems or approaches or materials whose limitations are already known. This opportunity is an opportunity for us to understand and respond directly and as boldly as we know how to the truth that Bill Gates spoke of to the governors on Sunday. We need to rethink schools from the ground up.

Our efforts will be as good as the questions we ask. So I want to share with you an example of the kind of questions I will be asking. What happens if we cannot educate 30 million teachers in the next thirty years? Now I do not know how many of you are familiar with our country here. I come from California. We educate 18 percent of all the teachers in America. We send more of them to graduate school, more of them go to work, and more of them stay at work teaching than all the national averages. Nevertheless, one in five teachers in California is in a classroom for which he or she is not trained to lead. If you specifically consider special education or linguistics or math or science, the numbers are worse. That is the

situation in the Golden State; it is in the public record. I would simply say to you, if we are having a hard time getting and holding qualified teachers in California, then a reasonable question for us to ask is “How will we do this work if, in fact, we are not able to train 30 million teachers around the globe?”

I believe there are powerful, effective, qualitative answers to that question, but we must begin to tell ourselves the truth, and we must begin to ask the bold questions. At the end of the day, our capacity building at the national level has to—has to—meet the test of durability, stability, transfer of power, and responsibility. It has to meet the test of being effective to the culture and politics, whatever they may be, of a society in which we have chosen to work.

The ability of American higher education to transform itself and the goodwill of American education to offer itself are unquestioned. Nevertheless, in this case, we have to proceed not only with all of that goodwill and energy but also with our ears wide open—wide open because, if in the end we are going to be helpful and useful to the transformation of capacity in other settings, we have to be ready to listen to those who are receiving—just as good teachers listen hard to students with whom they are working or adults who work together in informal settings listen to each other and learn more.

What an opportunity we have. What a challenge we have. This panel is going to lay out the broad outline of what the rest of the day—and the work that comes out of the rest of the day—can mean for us all. I will be here. I will be listening. I will do my very best with the other UNESCO education sector staff members here to take home what we hear from you and begin to turn it into something real, enduring, intentional, and lasting.

I am enormously honored to work with you on this task. This panel is a great one. Ann-Therese N’dong Jatta will speak first. She is our director of basic education. She is going to give you first an overview of EFA. Then, Robert Prouty from the World Bank is going to talk

to you about the Fast Track Initiative and how the EFA is being supported there. Next, Andrea Leskes from the American Association of Colleges and Universities will talk about her ideas and the imperative for the link with higher education in America. Finally, Phyllis Magrab, a professor of pediatrics at Georgetown, will talk about the EFA flagships. I fear that I have gone on too long, but I did not want to miss this opportunity to say hello to you and to show you a little bit of what goes on in my heart and mind. Thank you for being here.

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## An Overview of EFA

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**ANN-THERESE N'DONG JATTA**

*Director of Basic Education, UNESCO*



This presentation will provide an historical perspective of Education for All (EFA), a bilateral and multilateral strategy among governments, civil society, and nongovernmental organizations that has been in effect since the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. It presents an analysis of the goals set, the expectations created, and the outcomes met. It also suggests ideas on how the situation could be salvaged, in partnership with higher education institutions in the United States, to meet the 2015 target of EFA.

The Jomtien Conference, cosponsored by an Inter-Agency Commission comprising the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), had clearly negotiated goals that were largely based on respective parties' areas of interest. The arguments for the general focus on basic education as a prerequisite to the attainment of higher levels of education for development were well articulated. Consequently, conference participants reached a decision on the "expanded vision" of basic education, which specifically targeted the excluded and the disadvantaged populations. Special attention was to be given to girls' and women's education.

One hundred and fifty-five governments attending the conference signed a World Declaration and a Framework for Action.

Governments committed themselves to ensuring quality basic education for children, youth, and adults. The Jomtien conference not only was an attempt to ensure basic education and to respond to basic learning needs for all, it also was an opportunity to redefine the vision and scope of basic education. Sponsors thought the conference would represent a real turning point in human resource development, economic growth, rural and international migration patterns, and the formation of a new global vision if targets could be effectively attained. The vision conceived was to foster moral and intellectual solidarity throughout the world in recognition of a global concern, which, if left unattended, would result in worsened conditions of poverty, inequities, conflicts, and underdevelopment.

## **What Is EFA and What Were the Goals?**

EFA should best be appreciated as a concept and strategy rather than as an achievement of a set of goals. The concept of the expanded vision of basic education as earlier stated was a result of the discussions and negotiations led by the Inter-Agency Commission. While UNICEF clamored for inclusion of early childhood in basic education, UNESCO advocated for a broadened understanding of education to include adults' learning. Both UNICEF and UNESCO defended the use of flexible and diversified delivery mechanisms through the nonformal education approach. The World Bank emphasized the focus on primary education and schooling. Given the ambitious expected outcomes, the goals were carefully worded. They covered six broad areas ranging from expanding efforts in early childhood education to meeting learning needs of youth and adults, which are outlined as follows:

- Expansion of Early Childhood Care and Development, including family and community interventions especially for poor, disadvantaged, and disabled children.
- Universal access and completion of primary education by the year 2000.

- Improvement in learning achievements such that an agreed percentage attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement.
- Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to one-half of the 1990 level by the year 2015, with specific emphasis on female literacy.
- Expansion of services to provide basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults.
- Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills, and values required for better living and for sound and sustainable development.

Although it is true that the year 2000 was not necessarily agreed on as the target year, a consensus was arrived at very quickly when that year was established for the attainment of Universal Primary Education, which was one of the three measurable goals. It was a remarkable achievement that, for the first time, there was a collective and unanimous decision to address the problems of education in general. There was the determination to succeed, which was manifested in the level of planning to develop strategies and indicators to measure outcomes. The strategies were designed to achieve the following:

- Meet the basic learning needs of all.
- Give priority to girls.
- Accord attention to the special learning needs of the physically challenged.
- Focus on learning.
- Enhance the environment for learning.
- Strengthen partnerships.
- Broaden the means and scope of basic education.

During this planning, participants developed eighteen indicators as a guide to measuring enrollment, levels of expenditure, internal efficiencies, percentages of qualified teachers, literacy rates, and gender parity index. Equally important was the need to examine the

requirements to ensure that the goals set would be accomplished, especially in light of the many developing countries whose economies were not performing well. Coupled with the special needs created by the financial gap were the well-researched conclusions revealing the limited progress in educational attainments in certain parts of the globe. The other gaps identified included technical capacity and policy-related issues. The essential requirements that were decided as a result were the development of a supportive policy context in the social, economic, and cultural sectors; mobilization of public, private, and voluntary financial resources; and strengthening of international solidarity by promoting equitable and fair economic relations, especially trade relations and investments in training and technical assistance. What was visibly absent was a mechanism to assess or monitor the quality-related goals.

## **A Halt in Progress**

The midterm review exercise that culminated in the Amman Conference in 1996 endorsed the widely held opinion that, although educational advances had occurred in all regions, particularly in terms of access, the progress was slow and not as widespread as earlier anticipated. Quite notable also was the fact that the majority of the industrialized countries had not taken any follow-up measures for EFA goals. Only about 120 developing countries had reported EFA follow-up measures. The assessment of progress revealed the following:

- The expanded vision of basic education was reduced to bringing more children into school and, in some cases, to increasing the length of the first cycle to between seven and nine years of schooling.
- Progress toward equitable access and the quality of girls' and women's education had been particularly slow.
- Early Childhood Care and Development as well as out-of-school education programs for adults and youths had remained underdeveloped and undersupported.

- The focus on primary education had not been linked to secondary education, higher education, teacher training, and development of technical and vocational skills and life skills.

It became clear that there should be a shift from a climate of idealism to realism, from optimism to moderate optimism. The communiqué concluded that “there is no room for complacency” and that continued progress required even more forceful and concerted action. A further diagnosis of the situation revealed a marked shift from what was proposed at Jomtien and the responses reflected in the principles and practices that were drawn from the conclusions. The basic education agenda was diminished, resulting in a huge gap between intentions and outcomes. The focus centered around access for children at only the primary level and not on quality or on other constituents and levels. Furthermore, it was quite evident that, instead of a focus on learning, the emphasis was on assessing performance. Expanding the vision became confined to increasing the years of compulsory schooling, and basic education was interpreted as an end in itself rather than as a tool for lifelong learning. Also true was the fact that enhancing the environment was reduced to enhancing the school environment at the expense of learning environment. Finally, responsibility that was to be shared among governments, donors, CSOs (civil society organizations) and NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) had been limited to responsibility of countries. This situation resulted in very few grants and many more loans to countries, which all the more increased the indebtedness of the already poor nations. The EFA agenda was thus perceived as one designed for developing countries.

In view of those findings and conclusions, renewed focus was essential not only to reassess the situation but also to reset the development agenda and to vigorously pursue promises and commitments of old. The Dakar Conference established a new resolve and concluded on the note that “no country with credible plans will be thwarted in its bid to achieve EFA because of lack of financial resources.” A wave of initiatives marked the post-Dakar

period. The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan started with the first declaration on reaching gender parity and equality by 2005 and 2015, respectively. This pronouncement led to the setting up of the United Nations Girls Education Initiative, with UNICEF as the lead agency. In addition, the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), supported by a consortium of bilateral and multilateral donors led by the World Bank, began to provide financing for countries that have well-defined education plans along with approved poverty reduction strategy papers. In recognition of the great oversight and lack of focus on literacy issues, the United Nations globally launched its Literacy Decade 2003-12, designating UNESCO as the coordinating agency.

As the lead agency for the coordination of EFA, UNESCO has, in a recent review of its responsibilities, developed three initiatives to be launched in 2005 in response to the barriers to attaining EFA goals. The three initiatives can be seen together as addressing the human resource capacity requirements for achieving EFA:

- Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)
- Teacher Training in Sub-Saharan Africa (TTSSA)
- HIV/AIDS Prevention Education

From the many developments since Dakar 2000, one can affirm that the message to make a clean break and a new beginning is quite evident. The responses and actions require going beyond activism and rapid diagnosis and issuing a call for deeper reflections. It is high time that stakeholders with clearly defined roles address the problem of education. The need for strong leadership is urgent.

One of the missing dimensions that had not received adequate attention all this while had been the role of higher education institutions in the search for the purpose and direction of educational change and the search for a viable strategy not only for reforming education but also for achieving EFA. The situation is nearly as alarming as when we first began. UNESCO, however, is poised to strengthen and better focus its coordinating role for better results and outcomes. The

challenge will be how to engage and build partnerships with higher education institutions, particularly in the United States, to conduct research in pursuit of excellence and higher standards in education. Colleges and universities in the United States must look beyond their national borders as they interpret service to their community.

The challenge is enormous but not insurmountable. It is particularly manageable when one accepts the fact that the problem requires our collective and mutual support. Indeed, to ignore the reality is to participate in the creation of an unsafe and unsustainable future for all. Violence, conflicts, terrorism, and wars often feed on ignorance, little or no education, unemployment, and poverty. The time is now for all to act together to ensure sustainable development, progress, and peace on earth. We should seek answers to the following questions:

- How can UNESCO, U.S. academia, foundations, and legislative and business communities interact to make EFA a reality?
- What can institutions of higher education offer to add value to the ongoing efforts?

As we journey together toward 2015, it should be obvious to all that much is at stake. This enormous effort requires contributions from each and every one of us. Meanwhile, 103 million out-of-school children and nearly a billion youth and adults, especially girls and women, await our responses.

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## Supporting EFA in Fast Track Countries

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**ROBERT PROUTY**

*Lead Education Specialist, World Bank*

Cold reality sets in after all the international agreements have been signed and all of the speeches have been made and all of the photographers have moved on. At that point, everyone has to sit down around the table and say, “Okay, what is it that we have signed up for, and how exactly do we achieve that?” This stage is what you might call “the fine print.” Some of us have the opportunity of being the fine-print people, the ones who read the fine print and try to get behind the scenes to figure out exactly where we stand and what kinds of things are needed—in a logistic way—to help us move forward. I am going to talk about that a little bit today. The caveat that I give you is that this presentation is the fine-print presentation, the details of where we are now in trying to actually move this effort forward.

First, what do we mean by Education for All? As Ann-Therese N’dong Jatta has pointed out, some errors were made in the beginning. They were not necessarily errors of intent, but, nevertheless, the initial goals of EFA were largely set in ways that stressed education as schooling. Ms. Jatta mentioned the issue of quantity versus quality. As we sat down around the table, we came very easily to the understanding that quantity was not what we were here for. We were not simply trying to put large numbers of children in school, although that effort was certainly part of the plan. We wanted what those children were doing to be meaningful. We wanted it to be relevant, and we wanted to emphasize the idea that

to teach, teachers must also learn. Moreover, to learn, learners must also contribute to teaching processes.

So education is a two-way process involving communities of learners working together. The “for all” has been much debated. Some people said the wording should be “education for all and by all” to indicate that everybody brings something to the table and that this interaction is not a one-way relationship. Education for All also places the emphasis on equity—equity of not only access but also access to real learning. This emphasis really comes to the heart of what we are trying to achieve in the EFA efforts.

I would like to bring forward three points in this fine-print presentation. First of all, as a lifelong cynic, I, nevertheless, am in a position of saying that I believe that the EFA goals are achievable. Second and third, I believe that two areas will need particular attention if we are to achieve them: exclusion and learning. We must target exclusion. We must understand exclusion. We must understand why some children are not in school. We must also target learning. The dirty little secret of the EFA process to date has been that nobody is measuring learning. Nobody is keeping track of it. And we have a strong feeling that when we start looking at it, we are going to discover that it is not nearly what it ought to be. We have strong hints, strong indications that the quality of learning is not good. We need to know a lot more about this issue. We need to do a lot more about it.

## **The Fast Track Initiative**

The Fast Track Initiative is a broad partnership of the major organizations involved in the EFA movement. The intent is to speed up progress toward achieving good quality primary education for all children. This focus on primary education certainly does not mean that the Fast Track Initiative has nothing to do with other levels of education. We all know that literate parents help in efforts to achieve good results at primary school. In addition, if children have been to early childhood development programs, education results are better. But the Fast Track Initiative focuses on primary education, and it is

premised on the notion that we can actually speed up progress. It is grounded in mutual commitments of donor and recipient countries. This approach can be phrased, perhaps, as an intent to seek the balance between needs-based approaches and performance-based approaches.

The Fast Track Partnership has generally taken the position that funds should be spent where they have the most likelihood of doing some good. Therefore, there is a heavy bias toward performance, which can be seen even in the language used in contracts between the partner agencies and the developing countries. That language also expresses the idea that this contract goes in two ways. If the developing countries promise performance, then certainly the partner agencies must also promise performance. A lot can be done on this front. I do not have time here to get into all of this detail, but, certainly, we address issues such as tied aid—the tendency, in some cases the requirement, of donor countries that their finances be spent on their own technical assistance, their own materials, and so on.

The Fast Track Initiative, then, is an attempt to bring together the agencies around the same table, with everyone sitting down and talking and saying, “What is it that the countries are saying they need? How do we address those needs in a coherent, coordinated fashion that places the lowest transactional burden possible on those countries? How do we essentially help, but get out of the way while we are helping?” This approach really represents, I believe, a remarkable turnabout for the agencies. Currently, thirteen countries are receiving support through the Fast Track Initiative. The goal is to expand that number rapidly over the next few years. The identified number of countries likely to be involved in the Fast Track Initiative over the next two years is fifty.

I will just say very briefly why the Fast Track was created, but I won't linger on this topic. A lot of children remain out of school. In addition to those children who remain out of school, a lot of children who do come to school come only on an occasional basis. Even of those who do come on a regular basis, many of them are still

not learning. The Fast Track Initiative is premised on the notion that the vast majority of the children who are out of school are in the developing countries. All of those children have the right to go to school. The word right, by the way is one of those words that we just toss out casually in a conversation, but it represents many, many long—in many ways—years of struggle over vocabulary.

For instance, my own organization, the World Bank, did not use the word right and did not use right-based approaches to universal primary education until very recently. Only in the past two years has this language been used widely within the World Bank. This development may seem like a small thing, but it actually represents a sea change for our organization in terms of what our commitment really means.

Another premise of the Fast Track Initiative is that all of the interventions are based on the country's own education plans, which is part of the fine print. I am one of the privileged few who have actually read most of these education plans. To be honest, those plans are the reason for my optimism. The education plans are not business-as-usual plans. There are lots of questions about those plans and how they can be achieved. But they are anything but business as usual. Those ambitious plans raise a whole range of issues that, in many countries, have simply never before been on the table.

The Fast Track Initiative is, of course, also based on a premise of coordinated financial support, which involves the idea that we need to sit down and talk together, that the country itself is the largest donor to education. The other donors need to understand this responsibility, to be humble in the way they present their own aid to education, and to take into reality the need to work in a coordinated fashion.

Essentially, an education plan in the fast-track context is a plan for accelerating progress toward education, initially toward universal primary education. But many countries are already anticipating the need to expand secondary education and beyond. Basically, in most countries, the plans reflect four gaps. The financing gap is probably what gets the most attention and probably still needs the most work.

The policy gap has to do with countries attempting to put good policies into place. The data gap occurs because we do not have some of the most important kinds of information yet. And the capacity-building gap has to do with the fact that, although many countries are now identifying the kinds of things that they should be identifying as priorities, they still have a long way to go toward having the capacity at the right levels to take action on those priorities.

## **Developments within the Fast Track Initiative**

What are the sort of things that will be developed in the Fast Track Initiative? One is the indicative framework, an attempt to identify key policy and service delivery parameters. Countries that have achieved success in EFA have focused on those parameters. The indicative framework is a part of most education plans. It looks at the boring things perhaps, but the things that are important, for example, how much money the government is spending on education as a whole, how much of that amount is being spent on primary education, and issues such as teachers' salaries. Many countries are going to be hiring tens of thousands of teachers. For example, last year alone, Uttar Pradesh, just one state in India, hired 100,000 teachers. Those numbers are dramatically larger than any numbers the countries have seen in the past. Consider another example from a West African country, Guinea. Guinea had not hired more than 200 teachers over the course of a year in ten years. The country is currently now training and hiring about 2,500 teachers a year, more than ten times what it had been doing on an annual basis in the past. So there are huge increases in the numbers of teachers being brought into systems. Obviously, governments will have to look at how much they are spending on teachers. They will need to negotiate with teacher unions and to discuss how to make the EFA context a friendly one where teachers also feel valued.

The indicative framework also considers the pupil to teacher ratio. I visited a classroom two weeks ago that had a little more than 200 children in the classroom. Pupil to teacher ratios, even when they get to 40:1, do not look very good by Western standards. We all know

that within those kinds of numbers are huge variations that average out to forty. So the modest target currently set for most countries is about 40:1, and that will vary and, I hope, come down as time goes forward. I will not go into all the other nuts and bolts of the ratios, but the attempt is not only to certainly increase the hours of schooling but also to make sure the children are actually learning. The focus is on true academic learning within that context.

One of the developments in the indicative framework includes construction costs. Those costs refer to specific countries that have had unusually high construction costs.

The numbers related to all the indicative framework developments change pretty rapidly. So, taken in isolation, they probably do not have much value. What is important is that the numbers are all positive. The trends are all positive. The fine print in terms of progress since the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, shows that there is not a single region of the world for which the numbers are not positive. They are not in all cases as positive as they ought to be. Note, for instance, that Sub-Saharan Africa has gone from a 50 percent primary completion rate to about a 55 percent primary completion. But the numbers are uniformly moving in the right direction. This trend is, I believe, the grounds for optimism.

A lot of negativity surrounds the goals and suggests that they cannot actually be reached. In fact, there has been huge movement toward achieving the goals, movement at a rate that we have never seen before. In the late sixties, early seventies, and the very early decade of the eighties, we did see fairly rapid progress as countries gained independence and moved toward enrolling children in school. Then that progress died. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the enrollment rates stagnated from the mid to late seventies at 80 percent gross enrollment and gradually slid back to 75 percent gross enrollment by the late 1990s. However, we have seen a turnaround such as we have never seen before. In the past five years, for instance, the gross enrollment rates—only a weak indicator, but at least one

indicator of capacity and systems—in Sub-Saharan Africa have, continent-wide, gone from 75 percent gross enrollment to 87 percent gross enrollment. We did not have this information when the Dakar process began. It is extremely positive.

Look at a number of individual countries. Guinea was at 28 percent gross enrollment in 1990, at the time of the Jomtien conference. This year, Guinea is at 80 percent gross enrollment. Again, gross enrollment is only part of the picture, but there are certainly countries that have shown the capacity not only to move forward under extremely difficult conditions at a pace consistent with achievement of these goals but also to even move beyond. Similar examples include Niger, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Yemen, and others.

Gender parity is an issue that also applies to girls' enrollment. A lot of doom and gloom surrounds the issue of girls' enrollment. You will hear a lot of people talking about failure. For instance, one goal was that gender parity would be achieved by 2005. But let me say that girls' enrollment, in my opinion, has been one of the huge successes since the Jomtien conference. Countries have made enormous progress in terms of getting girls into school at a rate certainly unseen in the past. This achievement is not by any means one that declares victory and goes home. Much remains to be done. But historical trends have been reversed, and there is almost no country in the world that does not have a solid gender program in place, including many countries where you would not have expected much parity, countries that would not be at the top of any list in terms of focus on gender. Nevertheless, those countries are doing remarkably well compared with where they were in 1990.

I said earlier that success on the EFA goals will require targeted attention to exclusion. I think this issue is one of the great lessons we have learned over the past decade. The focus on girls is one indication. That focus has led to many, many more girls being in school than would have occurred with a more generalized strategy. The same thing can be said to apply to many other categories where children are being excluded.

Nevertheless, girls are not where they should be yet. They have made progress, but more progress is required. A disproportionate number of girls still are out of school, and poor girls in particular tend to be less schooled than any other category of children.

Leaders within the countries and agencies working on the Fast Track Initiative have reached consensus on some of the important obstacles that remain. This development is, again, a sea change for agencies such as my own at the World Bank. One of these breakthroughs is that user fees are not the way of the future. User fees keep the poorest children out of school. We already know how to achieve education for most. We have been able to reach 60 percent, 70 percent, 80 percent of children in school in many, many countries. We have every reason to believe that every country, virtually every country worldwide, with the possible exception of one or two, will be in that range of 60 percent, 70 percent, 80 percent of children in school at least. The challenge is the last 20 percent. User fees are among the fractures keeping that last 20 percent of children from attending school. User fees cannot be part of a strategy for reaching that last excluded group of children. We have seen huge responses as user fees have been abolished in the range of countries.

HIV/AIDS is another reason for focused attention. Many countries are losing as many teachers to HIV/AIDS each year as those they are producing in terms of new teacher candidates. Rural access is another huge challenge and has motivated another change in thinking over the past decade. Most children who are not in school are not excluded because of weak demand. They are excluded because of weak supply. Certainly, elements of both are involved. But most children who are out of school are in villages that do not offer a complete primary school cycle. For instance, a quick survey in Senegal showed that only 32 percent of children are attending schools in rural areas that offer the full six-year primary cycle. Enrollment drops off dramatically, more dramatically than we had believed, when the school is located in a village other than the village in which the child lives.

The obstacle is just not one of distance, although distance does make a difference, even if it is only 500 meters. What makes the biggest difference is when the school is not available in the village where the child lives. Nevertheless, we also have positive stories here. Sustainable rural school models that provide good quality schooling do exist.

Another big change among the major donors involves the language of instruction. If you look at the time of the Jomtien conference, very little discussion of language of instruction took place. Now, the general consensus is that children need to be schooled. They need to be educated in a language that they already understand.

Disability is the single factor most likely to result in exclusion from schooling. For a child with disabilities, the chance is greater than for any other child on the face of the globe that he or she will not have the opportunity to go to school. Achieving EFA will require new strategies for children with disabilities, which needs to get far, far more attention than it is currently receiving. We estimate that as many as 10 percent of children have disabilities, and we estimate that only 5 percent of those children are currently receiving support. Consequently, as much as half of all children who are currently out of school are children who have identifiable disabilities.

Conflict, of course, is a huge challenge. Conflict has been a challenge that, ironically, has cut both ways over the past decade. Children clearly are excluded from school because of conflict. Nevertheless, some countries such as Sierra Leone have actually shown that conflict also provides certainly not sought for opportunities, but, nevertheless, opportunities to bring children into schools. Countries, including Sierra Leone, have actually significantly increased enrollment rates during times of conflict, largely because children are brought together, again, under far-from-ideal circumstances, but are brought together, often in refugee camps, where they are provided with schooling. In the postconflict situation, countries can at least build on that schooling.

## The Role of Universities

Let me say a quick word about universities. A large part of the discussion among the donors has to deal with four of the gaps: lack of data (we do not know enough about what is going on); lack of money (we do not have enough); lack of capacity (we cannot always do the things we want to do); and, often, lack of policies. In addition, we struggle with an idea gap. The idea gap does not mean that countries do not have good ideas and that they need Western universities to come in with ideas for them and to do their thinking for them. The time of “experts” running around the world with good ideas for countries, thankfully, has passed. Many countries do not have the tools to carry out the ideas that they do have. Many countries have the ideas that will get them to the goal, so to speak, but many of them lack the opportunity to test those ideas, to share them, to use those ideas in a way that everyone has access to them.

This idea gap is an area where partnerships with the EFA countries and with universities—which I believe are going to be explored today, in part, at least—offer tremendous opportunity. I have been a part of this effort myself in many countries. There has been exciting partnership between universities and countries in terms of developing networks and giving access. Universities have access to huge networks. They can provide access to those networks in ways that countries can quickly tap into and that enables them to accelerate progress where they could not otherwise.

## Summary

So I have shared some of the fine print behind the lines. Sometimes we do not read it. But it can guide us in terms of what is happening with the Education for All program. The countries have developed programs that are worthy of support, that can be supported, and that will actually get us to where we want to go. I hope that over the discussions during the rest of the day, we will be able to talk more about how we can support these countries in that process.

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## EFA and Higher Education's Social Compact

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### ANDREA LESKES

*Vice President for Education and Quality Initiatives,  
Association of American Colleges and Universities*



Education is both a private and a public good; UNESCO's ambitious Education for All (EFA) agenda acknowledges both types of contributions:

- contributions to a better, more stable, and enriched life for individuals and
- contributions to the sustainable development of all countries.

I was struck and inspired by the conference title "Calling Higher Education to a Higher Calling," and so, for this short presentation, I have decided to stress education as a public good. I will frame my remarks within the concept of higher education's social compact.

This implied, often submerged, yet, nonetheless, very real covenant with civil society calls for higher education to fulfill a number of roles in return for public support (be it through direct appropriations, tax benefits, student aid, or research grants)<sup>1</sup>

- To preserve information and knowledge by, collectively, serving as the repository of culture in all its manifestations, and as the repository of intellectual inquiry and of humankind's past endeavors

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<sup>1</sup>For parallel framings of higher education's social goals, see Howard Bowen, *Investing in Learning: The Individual and Social Value of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1977) and Sylvia Hurtado, "President's Column Articulating the Social Responsibility of Higher Education," *ASHE Newsletter*, [http://www.ashe.ws/newsletter/news18\\_1.htm](http://www.ashe.ws/newsletter/news18_1.htm) (accessed February 25, 2005).

- To “transmit knowledge,” expressed in quotation marks now that we understand passive transmission to be a less-than-ideal teaching method. Contemporary parlance speaks rather of helping students achieve desired learning outcomes
- To create new knowledge through research and scholarship
- To apply that knowledge for the common good through practical research, application of scholarship, and service to the larger community
- To train the leaders of civil society and encourage talent
- To serve as social conscience, holding society to high standards—particularly with respect to equity, unfettered intellectual inquiry, freedom of thought and speech, and access for everyone to education—and to high-quality, relevant, empowering education
- To model, in its actions and functioning, the very kind of society it hopes to build, and the kind of society on which the UNESCO Education for All comprehensive goals depend

All of these elements of the social compact have relevance for EFA, and in some of them, higher education has done very well indeed. In others, I would suggest, we can do better, and in this presentation, I will expand on three of them: transmitting knowledge, training leaders of civil society, and modeling the desired culture and society.

EFA, of course, targets the needs of developing countries; however, it advocates for quality education for every citizen of every society. Its global vision does not relieve developed countries of their responsibility either for others or for objective self-examination; EFA has implications for access, equity, inclusion, and quality of education in the United States too.

### **Transmitting Knowledge (Educating Students)**

Let us look first at the transmission of knowledge or the teaching-learning function. Universities in all countries have the responsibility for ensuring that their graduates possess both broad and deep

knowledge. Largely influenced by the work of the association I represent—the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), an organization with 1,000 institutional members—a growing consensus is developing in the United States on what should be the outcomes of undergraduate university study in the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup> To summarize, students should develop the following:

- A set of intellectual and practical skills useful for individuals and attuned to the needs of the workplace and of society, including capacities such as analytic skills to understand complex problems, creativity to find novel solutions, adaptability, and the sensitivity to work productively in groups of diverse composition and varied perspectives
- A rich knowledge base on which to draw as they make sense of the world and reach informed decisions
- A profound sense of responsibility for their own values and those of society

While all of these outcomes or benefits of higher education are contributions to the public good, the last on the list has particular global relevance and significance for ensuring the civil will to fully realize Education for All.

In all countries, the university system will continue to play an important role in the education of future leaders. Those highly educated people will be making decisions that will affect education: decisions about investment, public policy, health, and social policy. In addition, they will be the articulate citizens who will decide through the body politic how resources will be spent and which will be the priorities for their countries and for the wider world.

For EFA to be both achieved and maintained, leaders and all educated citizens will need to have a fundamental commitment to

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<sup>2</sup>See *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002) and *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2004).

education as a basic human right and as a force for sustainable development. They will need to commit actively to changing an unacceptable status quo. Therefore, universities have a direct responsibility to ensure that their students—as part of learning and no matter their fields of study—engage with the relevant social, political, and economic issues; that they deeply understand education as both a private and a public good; and that they acknowledge their own part in ensuring EFA. Higher education—through the teaching and learning process (the central content it teaches, the curriculum it offers, and the pedagogical methods it uses)—must prepare the ground for a society with a conscience that will not tolerate educational deprivation and inequity. This role is at the heart of the university's public mission and its compact with society.

How well are we ensuring public commitment to inclusively excellent education as a basic human right? Can we do better in developing the civil will?

## Training Leaders of Civil Society

When we think of higher education's responsibility for training civil society's leaders and for encouraging talent, first to mind comes the training of classroom teachers (both preparing future educators for primary and secondary schools, and improving the skills and effectiveness of in-service teachers). The international magnitude of the teacher shortage problem is striking. Worldwide, more than 30 million new teachers will be needed to meet universal primary education by 2015.<sup>3</sup> In countries hard hit by AIDS—Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance—the epidemic is decimating the teaching ranks.<sup>4</sup> So higher education's ongoing involvement in preparing teachers—

<sup>3</sup> *Education Today Newsletter*, UNESCO, [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=37707&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37707&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (accessed March 3, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005: The Quality Imperative*, UNESCO, [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=35939&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=35939&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (accessed March 3, 2005).

and in designing innovative ways to meet the teaching needs—will continue to be crucial.

However, as the World Bank explains in its report *Constructing Knowledge Societies*,<sup>5</sup> our role in training civil leaders and developing talent goes beyond teachers. Civil leaders include all of the individuals who provide the moving force for local societies. Let me tell you a story recounted by Kavita Ramdas, president and CEO of the Global Fund for Women. Ms. Ramdas spoke movingly about a group of women lawyers in Mongolia (highly educated women) and of how in 1996 they raised a very modest sum—\$4,000—and used it to travel throughout the country encouraging women to vote. As a result of their efforts, 75 percent of eligible women participated in the very first election open to them—quite an encouraging result, I think you will admit, and a clear example of how, by training civil leaders, higher education can advance the democratic processes that UNESCO has identified as a necessary foundation for Education for All. I found this story especially relevant because women are seen as key to achieving many of EFA's goals.

Are there ways that higher education—and, in particular, the academy in the United States—can improve its training of civil leaders so the academy is a positive force for poverty reduction, for sustainable development, for security, and for peace?

## Modeling the Desired Culture and Society

The EFA Dakar Framework for Action identifies barriers and inequities as hindering the personal growth and societal strength possible when all are educated. The education-related UN Millennium Development Goals address access to basic education for the diverse range of children across the globe. EFA also targets adult literacy, which hinges on gender equity. Therefore, it seems incumbent on universities to examine their own practices to make sure they are modeling the society that they—and their graduates—

<sup>5</sup> *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2002).

hope to create, a society in which both individual and collective contributions are valued, in which females have similar opportunities as males, in which everyone has a chance to reach his or her potential, and in which the fortunate accept responsibility for improving the lives—in a sustainable fashion—of the less fortunate. Such internal examination might focus on the following:

- Teaching practices at the university level to reach a range of learners,
- Access to higher education for groups traditionally excluded,
- Women senior leaders as role models,
- Ways of providing an environment and climate for diverse perspectives, and
- The university's engagement with and contributions to local or global communities.

As a respected organ of society—and because of its social compact—the university needs to ensure that through its very functioning, it models and advances the basic social dimensions undergirding EFA. The key words to remember as we examine our own practices are *access, success, inclusion, equity, gender equity, diversity, and engagement*. How good a job are we doing in modeling an empowering, inclusive society?

## Creating a Movement to Achieve EFA

Embedded in the Dakar Framework for Action is a collective responsibility for achieving Education for All. Partnerships between and among many stakeholder groups will be essential if the world is to progress toward, and ultimately achieve, EFA's promise. I would like to suggest that in addition to looking at accomplishments over time—in part, through the annual Global Monitoring Report—we also think about the unfolding process of accomplishing EFA as a global movement for change.

To paraphrase the work of Parker Palmer,<sup>6</sup> an American educational intellectual, movements involve individual people or entities acting

according to their beliefs, then discovering one another and forming groups, and finally giving public voice to their issues. Movements progress through the following:

- Gathering data on what is already occurring and where,
- Uniting the work into a vision and enveloping isolated actions under the vision's umbrella,
- Building greater capacity for action, and
- Expanding the number of people and entities involved.

By fulfilling the elements of its social compact, higher education can advance the global movement for EFA:

- We can use our strength in research to gather the data and analyze it.
- We can lead and participate in the dialogue, helping to explicate and translate the UNESCO vision for multiple audiences.
- Through our undergraduate and graduate educational programs, through continuing education, and through international programs and partnerships, we can help build capacity—capacity of teachers, of professionals, of civil organizations, and of national education ministries.
- We can work to develop a growing core of visible, high-level advocates.
- We can raise awareness of the broader public on the kind of education that individuals and society need for the complexities of the twenty-first century world. Deep public understanding of and commitment to quality education at all levels, within the context of contributions to the greater good, is essential to ensure sufficient government funding.
- Finally, we can collaborate with governments, with NGOs, with international partners such as the World Bank, with the private sector, and with one another to ensure that policy at all

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<sup>6</sup>Parker Palmer, "Divided No More: A Movement Approach to Educational Reform," *Change*, (March/April, 1992): 10.

levels supports the concepts of access, success, inclusion, equity, gender equity, diversity in all its manifestations, and engagement. The Dakar Framework for Action is appropriately subtitled “Meeting our Collective Commitments.”

In conclusion, I would like to stress again the concept of building the civil will to support educational quality for all. I highlight this function because it resides at the very heart of the university’s social compact to educate for the public good.

Education to enable individuals to transform society is one of the desired outcomes of EFA.<sup>7</sup> Universities are in the position to foster such transformation through both the education they provide and their own practices. As repositories of knowledge, transmitters of knowledge, and creators and appliers of knowledge as well as civil conscience, sites of innovation, advocates, and policy partners, universities can respond to a higher calling and can join as activists in the global movement to achieve Education for All.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000): 8, #3

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## EFA and the Flagship Initiative

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**PHYLLIS R. MAGRAB**

*Professor of Pediatrics, Georgetown University*



To achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA) will require the collaboration and coordination of a broad range of national and international agencies and organizations. NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, higher education institutions, and others must come together to address the critical challenges facing nations as they work toward implementing EFA.

The challenges include addressing the gender disparities; the effect of HIV/AIDS on education; the education of teachers; the achievement of literacy; and the needs of the most difficult-to-reach groups such as children and adults in emergency situations, individuals with disabilities, and people living in rural areas. The Flagship Initiative was conceived to encourage partnerships at the international level to support nations as they develop and put in place their national EFA plans.

So what is a Flagship Initiative? First and foremost, it is an organizational focal point to assist countries in achieving their EFA goals with a focus on a specific challenge and through a partnership of committed stakeholders. Each EFA flagship is organized slightly differently, but all flagships involve a meaningful group of voluntary partners who are committed to the issue, a structure for coordinating

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<sup>1</sup> See *EFA Flagship Initiatives: Multi-Partner Collaborative Mechanisms in Support of EFA Goals* (New York: UNESCO, 2004).

the role of the partners with clear lines of communication, a way of funding the administrative costs and activities by one or more of the partners, a set of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the flagship activities, and a method of coordination with other flagships. UNESCO, as the Secretariat for EFA, oversees the Flagship Initiative.

Currently, nine Flagship Initiatives are in operation:

- The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education
- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Toward Inclusion
- Education for Rural People (ERP)
- Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis
- Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH)
- Teachers and Quality Education
- United Nations and Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)
- Literacy in the Framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade

Each of these Flagship Initiatives has defined objectives, a set of accomplished and future activities, a group of specific partners, and a contact focal point. In addition, each represents an opportunity for collaboration with higher education.

The flagship titled “The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Toward Inclusion” is an example of a flagship that has a strong partnership with higher education. It is administered collaboratively by the University of Oslo in Norway and by the Division of Basic Education of UNESCO, with additional voluntary support from Georgetown University, in the United States. Through collaborative involvement of the key stakeholders in EFA, including the disabled persons organizations, national governments, multilateral and bilateral donors, UN agencies, and other international organizations, this flagship has become a viable

mechanism for coordination of efforts and advocacy on behalf of individuals with disabilities so they can achieve EFA.

The goal of the flagship is to promote access to and completion of education of high quality for all affected by disability. This goal is critical because more than one-third of the 110 million children not in school are children with a disability. More than 90 percent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school. Like other flagships, this flagship conducts activities to assist countries with their national plans, works to mobilize resources, promotes networking, supports quality training of teachers, helps nations in the development of policy and legislation, and works collaboratively with other Flagship Initiatives around issues related to disability.

At a recent gathering at the World Bank, participants identified several critical challenges to meeting the goals of EFA for children with disabilities:

- Gathering data to better understand the scope of the problem
- Training teachers, particularly general education teachers, to work with children who have disabilities
- Providing teacher supports and viable working conditions
- Conducting expenditure analysis of different classroom models to understand the actual costs of a functional classroom that includes children with disabilities

Each of these challenges represents a significant opportunity for collaboration with the higher education community.

The Flagship Initiatives are an important support for creating systemic change in countries working to achieve EFA national educational plans. Because each flagship has a very specific focus, each offers a unique mechanism for a partnership with higher education. The Flagship Initiatives represent an important resource for achieving the EFA goals through broad international commitment.





## **PART III BREAKOUT PANELS**

**How the Private Sector Can Partner  
with Universities to Help Achieve EFA**

**The Challenge of Literacy: Partnering to Meet  
the Goals of the UN Literacy Decade**

**Networks Linking Higher Education and EFA**

**Challenges to Achieving EFA Goals and Measuring Progress**



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# How the Private Sector Can Partner with Universities to Help Achieve Education for All

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This chapter summarizes the breakout panel that discussed how the private sector can partner with universities to help achieve EFA. The panel moderators and participants are listed as follows:

## Moderators

- Marjory S. Blumenthal, *Associate Provost, Georgetown University*
- Stephen Ray Mitchell, *Dean for Medical Education, Georgetown University Medical Center*

## Panelists

- Charles Kolb, *President, Committee for Economic Development*
- Chester E. Finn Jr., *President, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Thomas B Fordham Institute; Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution; Member of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO*
- Jacquelynn Ruff, *Vice President, International Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Verizon Communications*

## Session Summary

UNESCO can build effective connections between the private sector and universities to help achieve Education for All goals. Currently, tertiary education involvement in EFA comes from the initiative of a small number of universities with distinct programmatic goals. The private sector has implemented several innovative, EFA-relevant education solutions in particular regions or countries. Like university involvement, private sector programs are usually implemented on a business-by-business basis. Although there is evidence of high-level coordination between the private sector and universities in the past, attendees agreed that better coordination should occur in the future.

Participants suggested systematic analysis of current university-private sector involvement in EFA-relevant initiatives as a starting point for greater coordination. Several panelists also suggested building an inclusive coalition of universities (including innovative community colleges), working through already established networks, or both. Core competencies of the private sector strengths have generally been manifest in successful projects; universities could add to a partnership by bringing to the task the vast network of individuals involved in the university community and expertise in research and teaching.

## Panelist Notes and General Discussion

Moderator Stephen Ray Mitchell opened with the story of Nelson Rockefeller building a public-private partnership to eliminate hookworm in the southern United States. The effect of this single, million-dollar investment by the private sector in 1930 increased elementary school attendance by 40 percent and is estimated to have increased lifetime economic earnings of the southern United States by nearly 45 percent. He then pointed to Kenya, where estimates are that nearly 80 percent of school-age children have intestinal parasites, and he asked—if these simple interventions have worked in the past—what would the potential effect be on education for these regions today?

Panelist Chester Finn opened by suggesting a tripartite relationship among universities, the private sector, and UNESCO, stating that, often, universities are difficult to work with. Universities have not been involved in several education reforms in the United States where they could have offered relevant expertise (e.g., K-12 reform). They could have a significant effect on (a) admissions expectations, (b) preparation of principals and teachers, and (c) education research. Finn noted that private philanthropies can wield carrots (funding) over universities, but in the end, he suggested, reform can be done without universities. The question should be “Do universities want to be a part of this?” If so, they need to move.

Panelist Jacquelynn Ruff outlined the philanthropic work of Verizon as Verizon Reads, Verizon Works, and Verizon Connects. Budgets for

those programs are funded at \$75 million annually. Verizon Reads has partnered with UNESCO and several overseas NGOs to fund literacy programs. Verizon Works supports workforce development by offering scholarships for citizens of other countries to study in the United States. Verizon Connects provides networking services and development for NGOs to connect communities. Ruff suggested that business involvement is serving both a need and an enlightened self-interest; businesses want literate customers. New projects include the Verizon virtual campus, which offers modular learning units to reach students in rural areas. Verizon seeks to build policy partnerships to work with organizations that need technology and infrastructure to deliver educational services.

Panelist Charles Kolb began by commending President DeGioia and said that he would like to see more universities involved in international education and economic development issues. Why is business a valuable partner? Businesses have an educated work force, corporate leaders understand the need to implement change and are impatient to drive change. Universities also bring valuable traits. They have a number of constituents who could help with broad engagement: students, alumni, employers, and employees. In addition, they have other connections, and they are the nation's vital center of teaching and research. Kolb envisions a model similar to the Committee for Economic Development (CED) government education task force (math-science initiative) where multiple partners engage in public policy goals. He also sees engagement as bringing innovative ideas to universities and the private sector.

## Key Points Made in the Discussion

The discussion generated nine key points and considerations:

- Educor (Argentina, South Africa) taps into financial markets; Junior Achievement reaches a number of students. We have some good practices; should we expand on them and, perhaps, catalog them?
- Verizon has tech centers in Puerto Rico and super classrooms in Venezuela. The centers and classrooms aspire to sustainability—but it is still too early to tell.

- The graduation rate in the United States is decreasing, and Bill Gates's assessment that we need to build education from the ground up may be relevant. Are good partnerships currently occurring within the United States between universities and pre-tertiary schools?
- Partnerships could be effective in some basic areas such as meeting the challenge of literacy and expanding opportunities for women.
- Could the twenty-eight Jesuit institutions of higher education form a working group and coordinate efforts?
- In forming coalitions, we should not forget workplace learning, community colleges, or private universities. Additionally, private training services could play a role in connecting schools and education communities to the world.
- CISCO has education programs in numerous "least developed countries" (LDCs). One attendee suggested that the role of the private sector is more than advocacy and checks. Rather, private sector expertise can be useful in coordinating partnerships and providing technical help. For example, voice-over-internet protocol (VOIP) may be useful in coordinating a consortium of universities in Africa.
- A good starting point might be to catalog examples of public-private partnerships and then to run a systematic analysis of EFA-relevant projects.
- Don't forget, in the United States, there are 60,000 private foundations and numerous religious institutions. Consider leveraging their expertise, encouraging them to look overseas, and including them in this process.

The meeting was both forward-thinking and pragmatic. Panelists suggested that EFA involvement would benefit all stakeholders, with U.S. universities realizing several unanticipated gains through their interaction with the private sector, UN organizations, and institutions in EFA countries. Several strategies and starting blocks for partnerships were introduced; however, panelists noted that the sustained and committed leadership of those in the university community and the private sector is needed to energize and give reality to this vision.

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## The Challenge of Literacy: Partnering to Meet the Goals of the UN Literacy Decade

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This chapter summarizes the breakout panel that discussed what the higher education community can do to promote literacy in underdeveloped countries. The panel moderators and participants are listed as follows:

### Moderators

- Guinevere Eden, *Director, Center for the Study of Learning, Georgetown University Medical Center*
- Virginia Flavin, *Chief of Staff, McDonough School of Business*

### Panelists

- Benita Somerfield, *Executive Director, Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy; Member, UNESCO Advisory Board to the UN Literacy Decade*
- Russ Whitehurst, *Director, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education; Member, Governing Board of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics*
- Reid Lyon, *Chief, Child Development and Behavior Branch, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health*

### Session Summary

The panel arrived at three key strategies that the higher education community could undertake to promote literacy in underdeveloped countries. First, the higher education community could identify the best research practices and measures for evaluating the outcome of literacy programs. Second, those in higher education could conduct research to identify the best and most cost-effective strategies of implementing literacy programs. Third, the higher education

community could find the best models that would lead to successful implementation of literacy in more complex settings.

## **Identify the Best Research Practices and Measures for Evaluating the Outcome of Literacy Programs**

Higher education can help identify the best practices and determine suitable means for interpretation and evaluation. Higher education can also provide help with project design and technical assistance. Specifically, universities can become involved in the analysis of data that has previously been acquired. For example, an adult literacy project could be evaluated by staff members from within the university rather than by a more conventional means such as a contractor. An example of this approach is the Intergenerational Literacy Project that is at Boston University and that has used the university's technical assistance to conduct and evaluate the research. Texas A&M University and the University of Miami have been involved in similar projects. Involving universities at this level increases the likelihood of obtaining measurable objectives.

What circumstances would be needed for successful implementation? Research and practice need to be coupled to provide cross-fertilization between the two. For example, the providers and the researchers need to be integrated, and research needs to be built into programs of higher education. Further, the findings should be presented in ways that are accessible to the consumer (outside of higher education) and should not be buried in the journals.

## **Conduct Research to Identify the Best and Most Cost-Effective Strategies of Implementing Literacy Programs**

First, more research is needed to guide decisions about investments that could potentially lead to increased literacy. These decisions will determine how a university or other institutions can best contribute to achieving high literacy levels across the world. Specifically, rigorous research could be conducted to understand what factors best

predict why children will stay in school. An example from another field illustrates this point. It has been found that distribution of a medication to counteract intestinal parasites was the best way, when compared with providing free uniforms or school meals, to ensure that children stayed in school. The training of investigators to conduct these kinds of studies would be one beneficial way for the universities to make a contribution.

Second, the field needs to obtain better data and statistics. The reporting of literacy rates collected within countries may not be accurate, and the data may be gathered by proxy. Future efforts should measure direct indicators of reading levels in diverse countries.

Third, higher education could gather more information about the particular incentives that motivate people to learn to read. For example, in this country, it has been shown that one incentive for prisoners to become literate is their desire to read to their grandchildren. Understanding the motivational factors that underlie literacy acquisition is critical for ensuring greater literacy levels.

What circumstances are needed for successful implementation? A set of coherent policies could be laid out by higher education to attract and train a work force that teaches literacy. These policies could address some of the existing factions with respect to the best strategies for instruction (i.e., choosing a language appropriate for the population). In addition, gender inequities surrounding literacy need to be addressed more directly. An imbalance in literacy levels exists between males and females in underdeveloped countries, and these levels will need to be addressed more directly through the involvement of higher education.

### **Find the Best Models That Would Lead to Successful Implementation of Literacy in More Complex Settings**

Higher education can help identify the existing models that are most likely to result in effective teaching and those that could be implemented in developing countries. Specifically, universities could

conduct research to characterize the best conditions under which these models can be implemented and could determine which models are suitable for complex settings such as those found in underdeveloped countries. The models could include diverse strategies and approaches such as reaching out to for-profit groups that aid in the implementation of the models.

What circumstances are needed for successful implementation? A thorough understanding of the complex situation specific to each country and its culture is necessary to identify the best model. For example, in the efforts to increase literacy, mothers should be targeted as much as children. Children's needs are the same as the needs of the adult, and mothers who read with their children stay in the literacy programs longer than those who do not.

## **Hurdles That Need to Be Overcome**

The group identified four critical hurdles that need to be overcome in undertaking the challenge of literacy. First, UNESCO needs better accountability and more focused definitions of its goals. Many of the principles derived from science-based evidence have not been implemented, and UNESCO needs to identify a better way of applying those principles.

The second hurdle relates to improving the education of teachers, especially in higher education, and changes must be long-lasting. Diverse parties need to be consulted when the changes are made, including policymakers, teachers, and special education teachers. One of the biggest hurdles in implementing changes in the educational systems in Africa will be the severe loss of teachers because of the AIDS epidemic. Higher education needs to look at the practical questions and to recognize that models that may have worked in the United States or in Europe may not be sustainable in more complex environments such as those present in Africa. Specifically, the theoretical models that are currently entertained are not at the grassroots level. Hence, more practical models need to be considered. One example would be to consider collaboration

between higher education and the Peace Corps. This approach may be more realistic and one that relies on existing relationships between institutions in Africa and the developed world.

Third, many U.S. universities are not even well situated to meet the needs of local communities yet alone those of the developing countries. The need is urgent for applied research in education that can be adapted to the reality of the environment of the underdeveloped countries. The universities, however, could play an important role in rigorous evaluation of those strategies as they are developed.

Finally, we need to establish greater incentives for schools of higher education to get involved. Clearly, money would help, but the academic culture also may need to be modified. For example, little funding is available for conducting research in underdeveloped countries, and the relative work load for any investigator in a higher education setting would, therefore, be tremendous. It is unclear whether this kind of work is recognized at the level of the administration and committees that deal with promotion and tenure. Publishing in journals that are more accessible to laypeople is not held in the same high regard as publishing in more specialized journals; yet the approach of the former would be more beneficial to the cause. The “boots on the ground” approach that is necessary is hard to implement and often is not supported by universities. As a result, there is little reason for investigators to pursue this type of work.

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## Networks Linking Higher Education and Education for All

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This chapter summarizes the breakout panel that discussed the networks linking higher education and EFA. The panel moderators and participants are listed as follows:

### Moderator

- Anthony Clark Arend, *Professor of Government and Codirector, Institute for International Law and Politics, Georgetown University*

### Panelists

- Dr. Winsome Gordon, *Chief of UNESCO International Cooperation in Higher Education*
- Marguerite Sullivan, *Executive Secretary, U.S. National Commission for UNESCO*
- James V. Feinerman, *James M. Morita Professor of Asian Legal Studies; Associate Dean of International and Graduate Programs; and Director, Asian Law and Policy Studies, Georgetown University Law Center*

After introductions and a welcome by Professor Arend, Dr. Gordon began with an introduction of UNESCO's programs on international cooperation and higher education. She emphasized that the mandate of UNESCO is to promote peace. UNESCO is not a funding agency, but as she emphasized, it is rich in intellectual capital and is a reservoir of information and networks. Two programs she highlighted were the UNITWIN (University Twinning)-UNESCO chairs and Academics Across Borders. Academics Across Borders is a program in which UNESCO pays basic expenses for distinguished retired professors originally from third-world countries to return and build capacity within their universities at home.

Most of the discussion focused on UNITWIN-UNESCO chairs and networks. The objectives of the UNITWIN-UNESCO chairs are to foster solidarity and partnership among higher education institutions in the global North and South and to foster South-South cooperation. Since the program began in 1992, UNITWIN and UNESCO have established 516 chairs, which can be based within just one institution but serve two institutions or countries. The program has also established sixty-three networks, which involve more formalized working relationships. Europe and North America are the largest users of the chairs and the networks. The networks and chairs are used to spread technical know-how and to facilitate development cooperation in areas of UNESCO priority, for example, water, HIV/AIDS, technology, literacy, and renewable energy.

Dr. Gordon explained the formal process in which a university puts its project request through each nation's national commission for UNESCO. She emphasized that the first level of quality control is commitment at the university level. A proposal needs to be approved by various divisions in UNESCO and then be signed by the Secretary-General. The UNITWIN program is a win-win opportunity for both sides because universities help UNESCO enact its mission, and they gain access to expertise they otherwise would not have. A formative evaluation is conducted by UNESCO and the partnered universities every two years.

Ms. Sullivan, a member of the U.S. National UNESCO Commission established by the Secretary of State, explained that one of her committee's jobs is to review the UNITWIN proposals. Currently, the committee has 88 members but will grow in the next few months to its legislated size of 102 members. The members are made of up sixty organizations, fifteen state and local individuals, and ten federal government individuals. Ms. Sullivan explained how the process will work in the United States and announced the March 21 due date for proposals.

Professor Feinerman commented on the presentations and expressed excitement that the possibility of UNITWIN chairs is now going to be extended to American universities. He emphasized the extensive network of connections that many American universities have already established with partner organizations in the developing world without the UNESCO connection, and, thus, the transition into UNESCO partnerships is natural for American universities.

Historically during the first wave of decolonization, there was a great interest among American universities to work and partner with these newly independent countries in the lesser-developed world. He spoke of the variety of connections and networks that Georgetown, a Catholic and Jesuit University, has with other universities.

Professor Feinerman commented that, because American universities are new to the program, we must consider what has been done in the past and see where we can best fit in and add value. He suggested that we may want to look at North-North-South partnerships and North-South-South partnerships. He raised the issue of not only needing to pay attention to the governmental side of things but also recognizing the power and necessity of academic freedom. In addition, he reiterated the necessity of long-term sustainability of the partnerships.

Questions from the audience helped to clarify that any institution, as long as it is involved with higher education, can submit a proposal; in addition, multiple institutions or universities can pair up and submit proposals. As long as the necessary forms are sent with the application, the process is not very cumbersome. There were suggestions of tapping into professional networks and associations as well as the growing service learning movement in American universities.

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## Challenges to Achieving EFA Goals and Measuring Progress

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This chapter summarizes the breakout panel that discussed challenges to achieving EFA goals and measuring progress. The panel moderators and participants are listed as follows:

### Moderators

- Elizabeth Hervey Stephen, *Associate Professor of Demography, Georgetown University*
- Judith Feder, *Professor and Dean, Georgetown Public Policy Institute*

### Panelists

- Mary Lou de Leon Siantz, *Director, Milagros Health Studies, Georgetown University*
- Kathleen Maas Weigert, *Director, Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service, Georgetown University*
- Mary Joy Pigozzi, *Director of the Division for the Promotion of Quality Education, UNESCO*
- Denise Liesley, *Director of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UNESCO*
- Nicholas Burnett, *Director of the EFA Monitoring Report Team, UNESCO*

Professor Stephen chaired this panel discussion on challenges to achieving EFA and measuring progress. The speakers highlighted a new look at quality, the utility of accurate and relevant data, the importance of monitoring, and the role of higher education in reaching EFA.

Mary Joy Pigozzi stressed the importance of taking a new look at quality education to better interpret quantitative data and to better

assess indicators. She stressed understanding the motivation and qualitative elements behind the figures so one could determine, for example, why, when, and where students drop out of school. Beyond the competencies of reading, writing, and arithmetic, ten dimensions of quality at the learner and system level shift the focus to the competencies, skills, and behaviors that learners bring to the classroom environment. For example, the five dimensions at the system level include the managerial and administrative system, policy environment, legislative framework, resource application and adequacy, and assessment of learning outcomes.

This focus puts learning at the center and promotes capacity building by capitalizing on what students already bring to the classroom. For example, if a student is better at a subject than the teacher, then the student should assume a teaching capacity. This focus, with an eye toward gender parity, considers what both genders bring, adapts the learning environment accordingly, and leverages the local customs and the different knowledge sets. At the system level, an understanding of managerial and administrative gender inequality can shed light on learning outcomes and can inform leaders about how to allocate resources more fairly. This approach to quality allows for incremental changes and for the identification of opportunities for change.

Finally, the role for higher education to promote this expanded vision of education lies in its training function, its technical assistance function, the opportunity it provides to reorient teacher indicators and measurements, and the forum it provides to engage experts and bring research to practitioners.

Dr. Denise Lievesley emphasized the importance of statistics and data for achieving EFA. As an international statistician, her profession is involved in building technical capacity, gathering cross-national data, providing guardianship of data, monitoring the effectiveness of aid, analyzing cross-national data, conducting methodological work in producing data, helping countries to collect data, and creating international classifications to collect internationally harmonized data.

She is involved with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, which was established in 1999 largely in reaction to concerns over data quality. The Institute is based in New York with sixty-five staff members and focuses on building capacity to collect data and on airing deficiencies or progress that those statistics reveal. Staff members work with the wider NGO community to help evaluate the data and are constantly learning from people with experience on the ground. As a lead agency, they are involved in establishing the key data needed cross-nationally and in coordinating the data collection among other agencies. In summary, the Institute collects and disseminates data, analyzes and interprets international data, provides a forum for sharing information, and promotes technical capacity building within countries for both users and producers of data to help inform evidence-based policy.

In the EFA process, statistics are critical for formulating evidence-based policies at the national level, so it is critical that countries have the data they need to make progress and—if participating in the Fast Track Initiative, for example—to learn how to use resources effectively.

The Institute is continually working on building methodological techniques; ensuring that data are policy-relevant; ensuring that quality data are reflected in not only their validity but also their fitness for purpose, timeliness, etc.; and measuring learning so countries can share best practices, can debate, can be held accountable, and can model what can be achieved. The Institute is working on helping countries to build statistical capacity to improve their information management systems.

Finally, building links with higher education is critical for developing methodologies to ensure that the Institute is at the forefront of technology and methodology, for helping to fill data gaps, for building capacity, and for consulting with users of the Institute's data who can offer feedback.

Nicholas Burnett, who was involved in the production of the EFA Global Monitoring Report, discussed the process of monitoring EFA

achievements while highlighting the difficulties in monitoring and measuring data. Each year, the report analyzes a special theme, the most recent one of which comprised quality, exploration of the richer countries' commitment to finance the poorer, and the global machinery.

Monitoring faces some practical issues. One inherent problem is that data on which people want to make decisions today reflect the past and not the present. Data problems also exist around financing and resources, often capturing commitments rather than actual flows. Finally, ambiguity exists around what exactly to measure when monitoring a particular EFA goal.

The report's special theme for this year is literacy. Difficulties arise in subjective versus objective measurements. For example, the subjective measure, which is based on whether people self-report to read or not, is higher than its objective counterpart. This discrepancy begs the question of what constitutes literacy—whether, for example, someone who can but does not ever read or someone who cannot read the official language should be categorized as literate. This clarification is important for answering the fundamental question of what can be done at the public policy level to accelerate the pace of acquiring literacy. Consolidating studies, assessments, literature, and other data can say something about policy. Hence, Mr. Burnett proposed the creation of an EFA development index, a composite index like the Human Development Index, to understand barriers such as increases in cost caused by unanticipated natural catastrophes like disease and conflict.

In addressing how to better work together, the academic community can use reports for teaching and for working with researchers in developing countries to shed light on areas where knowledge gaps exist and to offer practical solutions, for example, involving nomadic populations and child labor issues.

The last two panelists, Dr. Mary Lou de Leon Siantz and Kathleen Maas Weigert, discussed the importance of and methods for working with the academic community. Ms. Weigart emphasized that higher

education can be more involved in promoting EFAs through framing volunteer tutoring programs as part of a larger EFA goal; including MDGs in new student and staff orientations; giving EFA and MDG briefings to study-abroad students; enabling experiential learning to educate students to be more reflective; and, where education schools within universities do not exist, helping to support teacher development at the undergraduate level through a minor in education.

Ms. de Leon Siantz went on to highlight certain barriers to education such as the shortage of teachers, as witnessed in the United States. Some actions to surmount those barriers lie in salaries, teacher preparations, efforts to emphasize early partnerships between parents and teachers, accessibility of books for literacy promotion, improvements in school accessibility (time taken to get to school), improvements in the human capacity of students, efforts to leverage technology to offer online opportunities for students to engage with the world's best teachers, and efforts to increase applied research and pilot data.

In response to Robert Prouty's (World Bank) question about the legitimate standing of the West to tell others how to run their education system, Ms. de Leon Siantz emphasized the importance of partnership to achieve transformation and change. Caroline Bartholomew responded by suggesting that, if one is giving money, then one has the right to dictate how the money should be spent. Ms. Bartholomew also emphasized the importance of statistical information and additional development assistance programs. There is a critical need for information to shed light on what is working and on examples of success for potential donors. Also, one should be wary of incentives to manipulate data to attract more resources or, conversely, to make countries look as if they are not falling behind. On that note, Ms. Lievesley highlighted a trend of countries to over-report progress. This trend illuminates the need for awareness of incentives and for relationships with NGOs to understand those incentives. Also, she highlighted the need to teach the world to be careful with data and the need to work with countries to improve their understanding of how data can contribute to the building of their educational system.





## AFTERWARD

The Global Education Consortium



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## Global Education Consortium of U.S. Colleges and Universities

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Georgetown University has founded the Global Education Consortium of U.S. Colleges and Universities in response to the significant interest generated by the challenges and opportunities highlighted at the conference that Georgetown University cohosted with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on February 28, 2005.

The Consortium is an interest group of the U.S. higher education community that is involved in supporting Education for All (EFA), a global initiative lead by UNESCO to ensure that all children in all countries receive a quality education. This new consortium provides a forum for those institutions of higher learning to engage more deeply with one another, with UNESCO, and with related organizations. The consortium's mandate is to foster a dialogue among interested institutions to promote sound EFA policy and practice. This network is designed to encourage U.S. colleges and universities to build relationships and to share research and expertise with one another and, ultimately, with those countries struggling to achieve universal education through their national governments and institutions of higher learning. UNESCO's EFA initiative offers a challenging global context for institutions of higher learning to affirm the importance of universal education.

The Global Education Consortium will serve as a gateway and clearing-house of information related to efforts of U.S. higher education to support EFA. An interactive Web site and a number of Web-based activities will be launched. Additionally, the consortium will sponsor a series of teleconference opportunities for the academic community to link their interests with EFA needs in areas such as teacher training, literacy, and disability. Building on the success of

this year's UNESCO-Georgetown University conference, an annual gathering of a similar nature will be held. In addition, the Global Education Consortium will engage in developing and implementing targeted projects to address the multiple needs for achieving EFA, linking U.S. institutions of higher education with institutions of higher learning in developing countries.

Phyllis R. Magrab, Ph.D., chairperson of the Georgetown University Presidential Task Force for UNESCO and Education for All, serves as the director of the consortium. Her extensive experience related to UNESCO and Education for All as well as her deep commitment to improving the quality of life of the world's children provides the consortium with dedicated leadership.

For more information on the Global Education Consortium, please visit <http://gec.georgetown.edu>