



ANCEFA STATEMENT TO THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP MEETING IN ABUJA 19 - 20 November 2002

The Dakar framework of action is clear in placing an emphasis on national level action and seeking to achieve EFA through a concerted effort of partnership of all actors at all levels. Of particular note was the clear commitment to the active participation of civil society in the formulation of policy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EFA efforts.

At national level, the emergence of civil society networks and coalitions around education issues has seen phenomenal impetus. At regional level, through the work of existing civil society network such as the forum of African women educationalists (**FAWE**) and **Education International (EI)**, as well as actions by the post Dakar sub-regional and regional networks on EFA, **the African Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA)** and membership of **the Global Campaign for Education (GCE)**, the vigilance and participation of civil society in education issues is at unprecedented level.

1-The EFA planning processes

One of the key commitments made in Dakar was to develop a time-bound planning process. Towards this end, countries committed themselves to the development of a national action plan that was truly participatory by 2002.

Are we planning to fail? As the year 2002 draws to a close, civil society's perception on progress made on EFA by African countries is, at best, mixed. According to the BREDA report of September 2002, presented to the NGO/Civil society consultation in Malawi, on the status of EFA plans:

- **Out of 46 countries in Africa, 8 countries do not have a national action plan for Education and training**
- **5 countries have not provided the required data**
- **13 countries have a completed or almost completed version of the EFA national action plan**
- **9 countries have signed a memorandum of understanding with development partners**

However, even where these processes of review or plan development has been taken place, there has been a very limited civil society participation in the process (ANCEFA questionnaire in 35 countries in Africa, October 12th 2002 in the framework of the MINEDAF working document). “Consultation” which is inadequate, is constituted to be synonymous with “participation”, and yet the two concepts differ significantly.

Most governments have fallen far short of political will, thereby tending to carry out business as usual, to avoid the obviously greater demand of conducting a thorough needs assessment and critical analysis of current education systems to introduce in there place, systems which will make a marked and profound difference in people’s livelihoods and development.

According to the 2002 EFA monitoring report highlighting the limitation of available data both in terms of coverage, timeliness and reliability, “ more than 70 countries were unable to provide data on net enrolment rates for primary education. Public expenditure data on education are particularly weak. This paucity of country data place severe limits on national policy development, good regional analysis and informative time-trend assessment”.

2- The issue of financing EFA

Overall, financing to education continues to fall far short of the sums required to ensure access as set out in the Dakar Framework. Only a very few countries like the Gambia and Senegal come close to the necessary budgetary allocations necessary for achieving EFA – currently recommended at 26%. Most countries average between 5% and 10% with education often fairly low down on the list of national priorities – typically fifth or lower.

Unless significant resources are mobilized into education at a local and national level, the EFA goals will remain a dream. National governments must first prioritise education internally and mobilize their own resources if the international community is to respond. Even finances that have been released through the HIPC process and other debt-relieving mechanisms have not necessarily been applied transparently to education. Civil society continues to try to develop processes for effective budget tracking and finance monitoring in a bid to create the necessary environment of accountability and transparency.

At international level, resourcing which meets the promises made in Dakar has been almost non-existent. The call for a Global Initiative has failed to materialize up till the present – in spite of the valiant calls from civil society, most notably through the GCE. The World Bank Fast Track Initiative is a narrow programme designed only to address the two MGDs (and with questionable mechanisms and intent) and cannot claim to come anywhere near being the Global Initiative which was discussed and committed to in Dakar. Goal 8 of the MDG is about a global partnership for development and is beyond the control of most developing countries since as stated it refers to the international development partners only. With the exception of the Scandinavian countries where significant commitment has been made (at the recent Amsterdam Financing of Education meeting), little new resources are available. That, coupled with an increasing bilateralism in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, has combined to bring the promise of a global resource partnership to a nothing – so far!!

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There is a risk that the fast track initiative policy benchmark in the indicative framework become conditionnalities rather than broad policy guidelines. The FTI should be based on local context, support processes that enable countries to achieve education for all goals. The gap identified is seriously under estimated even within UPE. By calling for partnership around under estimated figures donors are short-changing developing countries. The World Bank is listing countries with credible and participatory plan, when we know from civil society in the ground (ANCEFA questionnaire finding in 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa) that the plan have been cobbled together in backroom somewhere. **The civil society question on this issue is “who certifies that plans are participatory and credible?”**



We ANCEFA membership national civil society coalitions in 23 countries across Africa are calling African governments:

- 1. To recognise the crisis in education and recommit themselves to investing appropriately in education. For most governments, this implies a radical shifting of education to the top of the agenda and at least a doubling of resources dedicated to education delivery from 2003 onwards until 2015.**
- 2. To institute genuine partnerships with Civil Society. Towards this end, all African governments should institute participatory EFA Forums for the development of inclusive, holistic EFA plans and frameworks for implementation, monitoring and evaluation by the end of 2002.**
- 3. In our fight to ensure sustainable gains in EFA, we must look to how our democracies are sustained today as well as in the future. Investment in education must be on the principle of the indivisibility of EFA goals – which calls for appropriate and equitable investment in all six goals.**
- 4. To place emphasis on strategies that will enhance Gender equity and address the impacts of poverty, HIV/AIDS and conflict in a sustainable manner.**

Northern governments and donors must be held accountable to their promises in Dakar. Support for education must be clear and readily available, free from the myriad of conditionalities, and supportive in assisting Africa address the monumental problems of achieving EFA. We specifically call for the increased acceleration of existing programmes and an expansion of support to all African countries during 2003.

Clear monitoring and follow-up mechanisms at national and regional levels must be developed which will ensure the participation of civil society organisations and will monitor progress and the challenges in achieving the Dakar goals. The role of civil society should be clearly spelt out in such mechanisms.