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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Committee on Education

Report on the eighth meeting held in Paris on 25 November 2002**

Summary

The present report contains the recommendations of the eighth meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UNESCO, which was held in Paris on 25 November 2002.

Introduction

1. In his introductory remarks, the outgoing chairperson of the Joint Committee on Education (JCE), H.E. Mr. David Stanton (UNESCO), said that the last meeting, hosted by UNICEF in New York in June 1999, had focused on girls' education; early childhood care and education; Africa; educational data and statistics; and the need to elaborate a framework to facilitate collaboration between UNICEF and UNESCO.
2. The meeting elected H.E. Mr. Crispin Grey-Johnson (UNICEF) as chairperson, and Mr. Stanton (UNESCO) and Ms. Margareta Husen (UNICEF) as rapporteurs.

* E/ICEF/2003/2.

** Submission of this report was delayed because of the need for consultations between UNESCO and UNICEF following the meeting.

3. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson said that girls' education is fundamental to development and recalled the commitments made by Governments, agencies and development partners during global conferences to keep girls' education high on their agendas.

4. The Executive Director of UNICEF said that quality education, particularly for girls, was increasingly recognized as an essential prerequisite of any global anti-poverty strategy and therefore was a key to empowerment. She said that the Education for All (EFA) movement, launched at the World Conference on Education for All, held at in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, had brought the two organizations closer in terms of collaborative work and had given rise to new mechanisms for inter-agency coordination, including the current United Nations reform process. As a result, both organizations had been able to define better their comparative advantages in the field of education.

5. The Director-General of UNESCO said that there was considerable strength and added value to be derived from the unity of purpose of the two organizations collaborating in the areas where their mandates converged. A main concern, however, was how to strengthen collaboration at the field level, especially because UNESCO did not have a large field presence.

Ongoing coordination: EFA and girls' education

6. Following the recommendations of the seventh meeting of JCE, held in February 1999 at UNICEF Headquarters, New York, the eighth meeting addressed collaboration in the two core areas of EFA and girls' education at the international, regional and national levels, focusing on results, impacts and major challenges ahead.

7. The JCE had before it a **background report** (*Collaboration between UNESCO and UNICEF in the Areas of Education for All and Girls' Education*, copies available in English and French upon request) which outlined the changing nature of cooperation between UNESCO and UNICEF since the beginning of their formal collaboration in 1989. The report highlighted a range of new, more broad-based and dynamic collaborative mechanisms being used by both organizations. These began with the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 (convened in Jomtien by the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank) and the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, which was established to guide and monitor follow-up to the Jomtien Declaration. The Forum provided a platform for collaboration between all EFA stakeholders at a time of growing emphasis on better coordination to increase synergy, avoid duplication of efforts and reduce the service burden on countries. The Forum produced a range of concrete products used to take stock of progress on EFA at the World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000.

8. A second new phase of collaboration emerged in part from the mandates given to UNESCO and UNICEF at Dakar, namely to coordinate work on EFA and girls' education respectively. This new phase relies on mechanisms that use the comparative advantages of each organization in a partnership which reflects the prevailing international trend in development work. In addition to EFA and girls' education, these mechanisms relate to cross-sectoral issues which affect these areas.

9. In addition to the more broad-based, dynamic mechanisms, collaboration has been facilitated through strengthened interactions between the two Executive Heads and between the education sections of UNESCO and UNICEF. Future challenges increasingly must be addressed collaboratively at the stage of planning national programme priorities and strategies, including making investment decisions. This would be reflected in Common Country Assessments (CCAs), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), poverty reduction strategies and sector-wide approaches, which have become the internationally recognized policy frameworks for collaboration between United Nations agencies and their partners.

10. The JCE **discussions** focused on the changing dynamics of cooperation between UNICEF and UNESCO in the areas of EFA and girls' education, and on new coordination mechanisms and their implications for the future of the JCE. The members recognized that regular collaboration between UNICEF and UNESCO was increasingly facilitated through more broad-based and dynamic mechanisms and by new forms of inter-agency coordination at the international, regional and country levels.

11. The Committee had extensive discussions on opportunities for strengthening collaboration in the field of data through the UNESCO Institute of Statistics; the linkages between countries that are part of the World Bank's EFA Fast-Track Initiative and the 25 countries where UNICEF has accelerated interventions; the importance of equal education for boys and girls; education and HIV/AIDS; early childhood education; countries in conflict; and the need for country-level collaboration.

12. Having discussed the report on *Collaboration between UNESCO and UNICEF in the Areas of Education for All and Girls' Education* at its eighth meeting, the JCE agreed that the collaboration between the two organizations has been solidified at international, regional and national levels in areas of mutual interest and in response to comparative strengths. Members further agreed that while the Joint Committee was undoubtedly of strategic importance in initiating collaboration and ensuring that early obstacles were removed, the current range of mechanisms fulfilled this purpose, thus rendering the mandate of the Committee obsolete.

Future collaboration

13. At present, neither organization reviews the other's strengths and complementary features when developing its programme priorities and strategies. If there is some collaboration at this stage of programme planning, in the context of the CCA, it should be possible to ensure greater synergy, avoid duplication of effort and signal the most sensible roles and responsibilities of each agency. Critical priority areas include the new UNICEF global strategy for accelerating progress on girls' education; the United Nations International Literacy Decade 2003-2012, to be coordinated by UNESCO and which will include women's literacy as a key component; and ensuring that gender is central in the planning and implementation of the Fast-track Initiative.

14. There were diverging arguments concerning dissolution of the JCE. One of the strong arguments in favour was the pace with which developments are moving and the resulting need for mechanisms that can respond more effectively to events. This point was exemplified by the fact that the last meeting was held before the Dakar

Forum. Specific mention was made also of meetings of the “Group of Eight” industrialized countries and the Fast-Track Initiative as other collaborative mechanisms.

Recommendation

15. Based on this discussion, the JCE decided that it had fulfilled its original mandate and should be discontinued, noting the institutional arrangements which ensure coordination and collaboration between UNESCO and UNICEF. These include the Dakar follow-up process at the global level, such regional arrangements as the conferences of Ministers of Education of African Member States, sponsored by UNESCO, and such country-level processes as the UNDAF and poverty reduction strategies. The JCE also noted that UNICEF had participated with the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in supporting and benefiting from the work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

16. Accordingly, the JCE agreed to recommend to the Executive Boards of UNESCO and UNICEF that the JCE be discontinued and asked the secretariats of both agencies to propose how to strengthen coordination within existing structures.

Annex**List of participants at the eighth meeting of the UNESCO/
UNICEF Joint Committee on Education****Held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 25 November 2002****UNICEF***Executive Board members*

H.E. Mr. Crispin Grey-Johnson, Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations and Vice-President of the UNICEF Executive Board

H.E. Ms. Ecatarina Andronesco, Minister of Education and Research, Romania

Mr. Xiaogang Tian, Ministry of Education, Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges, China

Mr. Salah Benyama, Ministry of Education, Director of Education, Morocco

Ms. Margareta Husen, Deputy Director, Education Division, SIDA, Sweden

Secretariat

Ms. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director

Mr. Cream Wright, Chief, Education Section

Mr. Youssouf Oomar, Assistant Secretary of the Executive Board

UNESCO*Executive Board members*

H.E. Mr. David Stanton, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the United Kingdom to UNESCO

H.E. Mr. Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Oman to UNESCO

Mr. Fumiaki Takahasi, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO

Mr. Carlos Alfaro, Director of International Relations and Cooperation, Ministry of Education of Cuba

Ms. Dorothy Littler, Secretary-General of the Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO

Ms. Tatiana Gureeva, Counsellor of the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to UNESCO

Secretariat

Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General

Mr. John Daniel, Assistant-Director General for Education

Ms. Aïcha Bah-Diallo, Deputy Assistant Director-General for Education

Ms. Mary Joy Pigozzi, Director, Division for the Promotion of Quality of Education

Ms. Lene Buchert, Senior Programme Specialist, Office of Director of Basic Education

Mr. Mark Richmond, Senior Executive Officer, Office of Director-General
