

## Tokyo Statement on Non-formal Education

*The Asia-Pacific region, which has been a cradle of ancient civilizations, a repository of rich intellectual resources and an engine of rapid economic growth in recent times, faces a paradox in having 612 million illiterate adolescents and adults, and over 60 million out-of-school children. Their rights to education must be fulfilled in order for them to gain life-skills and to live in human dignity.*

We, the representatives from 19 countries, reaffirm our commitment to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA) as enunciated in the Dakar Framework for Action. In the pursuit of these goals, it is imperative that we view non-formal education (NFE) as an equal partner of formal education. Recognizing the rich diversity and complexity of the Region, we envision non-formal and formal approaches in education as mutually reinforcing each other in establishing a knowledge-based society.

We call upon all EFA partners to recognize the pivotal role of NFE in moving towards the goals set by the Dakar Framework for Action:

- Expanding and improving ECCE, especially for the most disadvantaged.
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, especially girls, children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality by 2015.
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

**We note** with concern that the presence of large illiterate populations and people without adequate competencies to learn effectively in an information-based society could lead to further accentuation of the digital divide and undermine all efforts to combat poverty and ignorance.

### **We recognise that**

- A literate environment is fundamental to poverty alleviation, peace and sustainable development.
- Creation of a literate society requires building linkages among different sectors involved in social and economic development.
- Elimination of gender disparity is a vital component of the EFA initiative.
- Support of international agencies and civil society is indispensable.

### **We call for**

- Declaring the first decade of the 21st century as the UN Literacy Decade.
- Including literacy and continuing education as an integral component of the EFA National Action Plans to be adopted by 2002.
- Building an appropriate and effective institutional arrangement for NFE as well as a system of equivalency between formal and non-formal education.
- Promoting community-based participatory learning programmes.
- Applying information and communication technology (ICT) relevant to the needs and aspirations of local communities.
- Providing renewed emphasis on authentic assessment of progress with focus on both quantitative and qualitative aspects.
- Significantly increasing funding for NFE from government budgets, bilateral and multilateral donors.