



**10thE-9 Ministerial Review Meeting
Islamabad, Pakistan - 27-28 November 2014**

**Joint E-9 Statement on Education Beyond 2015
(Islamabad Statement)**

Preamble

We, the participants of the 10th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 27 to 28 November 2014 adopt this statement. We express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for hosting this important meeting.

We have taken stock of the progress made since 2000 and challenges remaining in the nine countries in achieving the six Education for All (EFA) goals, and have reflected on the priorities and prospects for each of our countries to sustain and further advance educational development beyond 2015. Our deliberations were based on a careful examination of the National EFA 2015 Reviews of the countries concerned, the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting (Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2014), the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and take into account the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development as well as the changing global environment that shapes the cooperation among the E-9 countries.

E-9 Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Agenda

1. Since the establishment of the E-9 Initiative in 1993, with the aim of strengthening national efforts to ensure access to quality basic education in the nine highly populated developing countries, where the scale of the challenge was the greatest, the nine countries have made significant progress towards achieving the EFA goals. While the size and scale of progress has been diverse among the nine countries, we recognize that the EFA agenda remains unfinished in each of the countries in terms of fulfilling the equal right to relevant and quality education for all. At the same time, multifaceted social and economic transformation and the changing landscape of international cooperation have given rise to new challenges for educational development. These persistent and emerging challenges for educational development are well reflected in the current proposal for the education goal in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

2. We fully endorse the vision, principles and targets laid out in the Muscat Agreement, noting that the overarching goal to *'ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030'* reflects the aspiration of each of our countries for national educational development beyond 2015. We call for the formulation of targets to be responsive to the needs, aspirations and diverse contexts of the E-9

countries. We commit to enhancing the collaboration among the E-9 countries to implement and monitor the Framework for Action of the post 2015 education agenda that will be adopted at the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015).

3. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right for all children, young people and adults and an essential condition for inclusive and sustainable human and social development. We also reiterate the importance of education in promoting human rights, gender equality and responsible citizenship in an increasingly globalized world based on principles of respect for life, human dignity, cultural diversity, social justice and international solidarity.

Priority Action Areas for the E-9 countries

Given the diverse contexts of the E-9 countries, the priority action areas outlined below represent the common challenges these countries face in meeting learning needs of societies characterized by large population and significant level of internal social and cultural diversity.

4. Ensuring equitable and inclusive access to quality education

We should make every effort possible to ensure that all children, youth and adults have equal access to quality learning opportunities, at all levels of education, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to tertiary and higher education, in both formal and non-formal settings. We are determined to address all forms of marginalization as well as disparity and inequalities in access to effective and relevant learning opportunities.

5. Quality of teaching and learning

We acknowledge that the priority action for the E-9 countries should focus on the improvement of the professional capability and performance of teachers and education personnel, in particular school principals and on the policies that enable them to deliver effective and quality learning. We also commit to strengthening mandatory pre-service teacher training, large-scale learning assessment and expanding the use of ICTs for improving the teaching and learning processes as well as learning outcomes.

6. Lifelong learning for all

We acknowledge the relevance of lifelong learning for all as an overarching framework that inspires and shapes the vision of learning and organization of its implementation. This must necessarily be based on a system of recognition, validation and assessment of learning, regardless of the non- formal or formal pathways through which learning is delivered. We further commit ourselves to expanding access to and enhancing the quality of compulsory schooling for all children as defined by the national legislation of each country.

The sheer numbers of out-of-school children and youth and adults with insufficient literacy skills in the E-9 countries continues to be a great challenge. In addition, the fact that the absolute number of illiterate adults is growing in a number of countries is an issue of serious concern. We are determined to scale up efforts to promote functional literacy and non-formal education programmes, supervised by the government and adapted to the diverse local contexts and needs.

7. Skills for work and competencies for citizenship and social cohesion

In light of socio-economic and demographic transformations, not least of which are shifting labour market requirements, we are determined to improve technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems in the E-9 countries so that all learners can acquire relevant competencies for decent work and citizenship.

All children, youth and adults should also be provided with relevant skills to enable them to lead their own lives, participate actively and responsibly in their communities, embrace diversity, live harmoniously together and with the environment, and contribute to peaceful and sustainable development.

8. Governance and management of education systems

Given the large size of the education systems, the scale of the challenges and the diversity of the contexts of the E-9 countries, governance and management are key to effective delivery of education. We commit to ensuring that adequate and effective mechanisms for participation, transparency and accountability of stakeholders at all levels of the education system are in place. We further acknowledge that moving management and accountability effectively to the sub-national levels is no straightforward matter but a particular area to be addressed for the large education systems of the E-9 countries.

We commit to improving the collection, analysis and use of data, and the effective functioning of the education management information system to enable the timely collection and dissemination of information for planning and monitoring of education inputs, processes and outcomes. We further commit to enhancing the capacity of stakeholders in these areas.

9. Financing of education

Education should be the top priority for government funding. While government is the primary duty bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education, funding can also be mobilized from other sources and through innovative mechanisms. We commit to putting in place mechanisms required to increase and improve the results of government funding for education including mobilization of resources from both public and private sources.

We strongly recommend reaching the internationally recognized benchmark of 4-6 percent of gross domestic product and/or 20 percent of total public expenditure for education. While emphasizing that strong domestic financing is the key to success, we also recommend development partners to increase and better target their aid to education, in particular to those countries most in need. We ask that international education financing mechanisms support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda by providing funding according to the needs and priorities of the respective countries.

Towards the World Education Forum 2015

We request UNESCO, along with UNICEF and with the support of the other EFA co-convening agencies, civil society, and other international and regional partners, to continue leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda, and the development of the corresponding Framework for Action. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to coordinate and provide technical support for the implementation and monitoring of the future education agenda.

We further pledge to promote the future education agenda in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. We will also work to ensure that the outcomes of the related international education conferences are taken into account in the future education agenda. We will ensure that the education goal and targets of the global post-2015 development agenda to be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, are fully aligned with the education agenda that will be adopted at the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015). To this end, we will actively participate in future consultations, and will facilitate and coordinate the debates in our respective countries.