

**The Fourth Ministerial Meeting
for Ministers of Education of G8 and BMENA Countries
Muscat 1-2 November 2008**

Final Communiqué (draft)

As agreed at the Third G8-BMENA Ministerial held in Bonn, Germany on 20th and 21st of November 2008, the Fourth Ministerial Meeting took place in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman on the 1st and 2nd of November 2008. Delegations from the countries mentioned on the attached list participated.

The meeting discussed issues raised in the March 2008 Task Force paper "Effective teaching for relevant learning". These were:

- Teacher education and professionalism;
- Incentives and accountability;
- Management, leadership, teaching environment and partnership.

To inform discussion, papers were commissioned from the Kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Jordan, the Republic of Yemen, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Ministers and experts agreed that the teacher is central to the task of meeting 21st century economic and social challenges. A wealth of knowledge and experience exists within the region and internationally on this subject. However, more effort is needed to share and implement this experience.

Ministers agreed to the following:

1. It is necessary to raise the status of the profession and to attract high quality entrants.
2. We need new strategies to attract, select, prepare, develop and induct new teachers and provide relevant professional development throughout the teacher's career:
 - New entrants must be prepared in teacher education institutions that have transformed themselves by adoption of up to date curricula, improved pedagogy and assessment
 - Schools should be partners in the preparation of teachers. New teachers should be supported by school leaders who can coach, mentor and inspire them. Teachers should be encouraged to undertake classroom and action based research to improve their techniques; they already have a wealth of knowledge and experience and ways should be found to capitalize on this.
 - Where there are separate ministries for schools and higher education, systems should be established for close coordination in regard to teacher preparation and development.
3. Systems of teacher incentives to reward high performance must go hand in hand with robust accountability measures that are fair and transparent.

They should be used as an empowering mechanism to motivate the whole education community.

4. A strong quality assurance framework and culture should be encouraged to ensure sustained high performance in all schools.
5. Leadership through the sector is crucial to high quality teacher and pupil performance; leadership training based on concepts of instructional and shared leadership is vital in this task.
6. New partnerships between schools, families and the private sector with Ministries of Education are needed to ensure the participation of all concerned in supporting new teaching methodologies.

In regard to other issues, Ministers:

7. Welcome the consensus on exchange of information regarding national plans and strategies of development and reform of education through different channels, especially through special electronic sites of this Initiative. They also agreed on increasing topics written in Arabic on these sites including translations in both directions.
8. Welcome the establishment of the Regional Centre of ICT in the Kingdom of Bahrain under the auspices of the UNESCO bearing in mind the role that this Centre may play at the regional level with regard to education in general and to the development of teacher education in particular.
9. Request that special attention should be paid to the special needs of schools systems and teachers in conflict or post conflict situations.
10. Note the importance of developing an effective mechanism for following up the outcome of previous ministerial meetings. Ministers welcome, in this respect, the gesture made by the host country to follow up the decisions of this meeting until the next fifth ministerial meeting is held. They request the Task Force to present a comprehensive view on measures to support the sustainability of the process. They also acknowledge the suggestion presented by the host country to hold ministerial meetings every two years.