

**BROADER MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION  
AND MEMBER STATES OF THE G8  
MINISTERIAL MEETING ON EDUCATION  
DEAD SEA, JORDAN  
23 MAY 2005**

**FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRESS**

Ministers of the Broader Middle East and North Africa and G8 met in Jordan on 23 May, 2005 and confirmed their commitment to the process of cooperation under the Forum for the Future launched in Rabat in December 2004, with their respective bilateral and multi-lateral instruments. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the US Middle East Partnership Initiative, and the Japan-Arab Dialogue Initiative are examples of the strong commitment of the G8 to supporting education reform in the region.

Ministers agreed on the importance of making the reform of education from basic to higher education, including technical and vocational education a top national priority. They further agreed education reform is aided by economic development and peace and security. Ministers recognised that change and reform will be within the context of national priorities and the cultural setting. In order for any reform to be effective, it must be home grown and balance national identity and the best of outside advice and practice.

Ministers discussed the four themes of:

- Critical Success Factors for Educational Reform
- Literacy and Access
- Social Inclusion
- Quality and Relevance

Ministers agreed on the following essential collaborative actions to maintain progress and momentum:

- To hold a regular dialogue and review of progress including at Ministerial level.
- To address the need to transform the education system through comprehensive system-wide education reform that includes governance, administration and management.
- In order to build understanding and ownership, encourage wider participation in the process of design and implementation of education reform programmes among all segments of society including teachers, parents, the public and the private sector with leadership and political support from the top.
- To continue and extend the sharing of information on best practice at a regional and wider level, including through effective use of ICT and e-networks.
- To explore means to strengthen technical and financial support to education reform in the region through respective bilateral and multilateral instruments.

In the area of Literacy and Access Ministers agreed

- To reaffirm their commitment to halve the level of illiteracy in the region by 2015.
- To endorse the outcome of the Workshop on Literacy held in Algiers in April 2005.
- To utilise and strengthen on-going regional programmes (eg UNESCO's Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme) in order to build national capacities in areas of policies, research and information/statistics, focusing on priority countries in the region and on women, girls and the excluded.

- To focus on, and support, the countries in the region with illiteracy as a priority and focus on meeting the needs of women, girls and the excluded.
- To emphasise usage of community-based solutions and local resources.
- To follow up the experts meeting in Algeria by creating a working group consisting of Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Iraq, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Oman and ALESCO and ISESCO and the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, France and the European Commission. Other countries may choose to join. The first event for this Working Group will be the upcoming 6 – 8 September 2005 Cairo Meeting, which will be a technical-level meeting. To promote Social Inclusion, Ministers agreed:
  - To encourage national policies for inclusion, in particular girls and those with special needs, and ensure the right to education built upon existing plans and successful practices.
  - To focus efforts on raising public awareness about children with special needs and on closing gender gaps.
  - To develop measures to reduce non-attendance and drop-out from formal education.
  - To find ways of exchanging best practice and experience across the region.
  - To enhance partnerships across public and private service providers to more effectively utilise available resources.
  - To encourage and introduce exchange programmes at the level of schools, universities and education professionals

In the area of Quality and Relevance Ministers agreed:

- That groups of BMENA, G8 and other donors interested in particular aspects of education quality should come together to define technical and other support needs and to identify appropriate indicators for monitoring progress.
- Through national and regional fora bring together government, private sector and civil society to jointly address education quality and relevance, including linking learning outcomes to employment opportunities and citizen participation.
- To expand programs that address skills for young people linked to employment and entrepreneurship.
- To establish an Education Evaluation Task Force comprised of interested BMENA, G8 countries and other donors to formulate national and/or regional recommendations, using existing mechanisms, practices and research.
- Explore regional collaboration in key areas of learning and teaching, e.g., curriculum development including e-content, teacher training, school leadership, and professional and learning standards.

Ministers agreed to review progress on Vocational Training and Literacy before November and agreed to report progress to the Second meeting of the Forum for the Future in Bahrain on 12 November 2005.

Finally, the Ministers agreed to establish a task force that would carry forward the agreed actions and to meet during 2006 to review progress.