



United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All



UNESCO Consultative Meeting

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Paris

April 6 and 7, 2004

UNESCO Consultative Meeting

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UNESCO, Paris, Room 10, Tuesday and Wednesday, April 6 and 7, 2004

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

First Day, Wednesday, April 6th, 2004

A. Introduction

In its capacity as the coordinating agency at international level mentioned in Resolution 54/122, UNESCO arranged a two-day Consultative Meeting at UNESCO Headquarters on 6-7 April 2004. The UNESCO Basic Education Division (ED/BAS) in cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) organized the meeting.

The consultation had three objectives.

1. To review UNLD progress and to discuss future strategies for advancing the UNLD at both the international and national levels.
2. To design an international mechanism to accelerate, monitor and report UNLD progress.
3. To suggest ways to achieve the goals of the UNLD.

B. Opening Session

Ms. Aicha Bah Diallo, UNESCO's Deputy Assistant Director-General for Education and the Chair for the morning session, introduced Sir John Daniel, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education who gave the welcoming address. After his remarks participants were invited to introduce themselves and their organizational affiliations. The objectives of the meeting, the adoption of the agenda and the identification of moderators and rapporteurs followed. Mr. Adama Ouane, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education, assumed the Chair for the afternoon session

C. Welcoming Address

Dr. Daniel stressed the international importance of literacy, especially for adults saying that the UNLD puts the spotlight on literacy challenges and mobilizes actors to address these issues. Illiteracy is a persistent problem worldwide. By the time of the Dakar Declaration the world had only decreased the world illiteracy rate from 25% in 1990 to 20% in 2000.

Literacy acquisition and the uses of literacy are inseparably linked to broader social aims and affect all aspects of life and livelihood. The outcome of the Decade should be locally sustainable literate environments where people can express their ideas and views,

engage in effective learning, participate in the written communication that is a feature of democratic societies.

From UNESCO's perspective this Consultative meeting had three objectives: 1) to review progress and discuss future strategies to advance the Decade internationally and regionally; 2) to design ways to monitor and report progress during the Decade; and 3) to suggest ways to achieve the Decade's goals.

D. Agenda 1: Overview of UNLD Progress during 2003-2004

Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Chief, Literacy and Non-Formal Education Section, UNESCO.

UNESCO's role in the UNLD has two features. The first is to coordinate international efforts by sharing information, by facilitating partnerships and by organizing consultations among players. Its second task is to implement literacy and NFE activities that contribute to UNLD goals. While UNESCO is the UNLD international co-ordinator many other players need to be engaged as actors and as partners.

He reviewed the range of launch activities and highlighted some projects that are addressing UNLD objectives. He explained the information and resource exchange approach being set up featuring UNLD focal points at every UNESCO Regional education office and at the UIE. He noted that UNLD regional resource teams were established in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Europe and North America. Finally a UNLD international resource persons' team was being formed.

UNESCO is concerned about the fact that current projections are that 79 countries may not meet Dakar Goal four. There is a lack of reliable data on literacy and a lack of information on NFE. Literacy and NFE policies are underdeveloped in many parts of the world. The lack of attention to adult literacy and insufficient financial and human resources are also issues. There is a need for greater coordination of global development goals (the MDGs and the FTI) and the need to enhance literacy in EFA national plans of action.

The international timeframe for the UNLD requires an initial progress report to the UNESCO Executive Board and to the U.N. General Assembly in 2004; the EFA Global Monitoring Report on Literacy and the High Level Group Meeting on EFA in 2005; a UNLD mid-term review in 2007; and UNLD progress reports in 2006, 2008, 2010 with a final report in 2012.

E. Agenda 2: Regional Presentations on "Issues and Challenges in achieving UNLD Goals: Where do we stand and where should we go?"

Mr. Maman Sidikou of the World Bank moderated this session while Professor John Cummings of Harvard was the Rapporteur assisted by Sayeeda Rahman.

E. 1. Africa: Jean-Marie Byll Catara from the ADEA and Martine Simeti UNESCO Dakar.

Africa's literacy challenges include a lack of literacy policies; a shortage of financial and human resources both from governments and from the international community; an absence of political recognition of local languages in education; weak literate environments with few linkages to local languages; the absence of a culture of reading; poor funding for research especially on literacy issues; and the need for institutions to train trainers. Nonetheless there is a growing recognition of the literacy issue and an acceptance of the enhancement of literacy as a way to achieve EFA goals. People are seeking new appropriate strategies to finance literacy and to ensure national level ownership of the UNLD. UNESCO's role in the Region should be to facilitate, to define modalities of work, to coordinate and monitor, and to use resource persons to mobilize other partners.

E. 2. Arab States: Ms. Nour Dajani (UNESCO Beirut) and Ms. Lilia Iskander, Managing Director, Community and Institution Development, Cairo.

Literacy is a high priority in the Arab states where an estimated 70 million are illiterate and approximately 7.5 million children are out of school. Between 1990 and 2000 the illiteracy rate fell from 48.7% to 38.5%. The challenges in the region include deteriorating economies in post-war or post-conflict countries; an absence of political attention to literacy; inadequate funding; a lack of measurable goals and achievable strategies; weak government-run public education systems and elevated school drop-out rates. Nonetheless increasing the education of women and girls, as well as reaching school dropouts, are priorities as are skills development and health education in literacy provision.

Suggested solutions include launching national, sub-regional and regional literacy campaigns to mobilize state and civil society; the recruitment of professionals, business people and celebrities as role models for youth; the strengthening of the capacity of civil society and non-governmental organizations to deliver literacy programmes; mobilizing untapped human resources as volunteers and literacy workers; developing and strengthening regional data collection, measurement and monitoring instruments; creating networks that generate reliable information to help governments make informed decisions and the adoption of new concepts and methodologies, for example, UNILIT (University students for literacy) as well as Literacy and Reading passports.

E. 3. Europe and North America: Carole Medel-Anouevo (UNESCO Institute for Education) and John Cummings (National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, Harvard).

The focus within the European Union (EU) is on Lifelong Learning in which basic skills, especially "new basic skills" (learning other languages, ICTs, ways to live together), are considered important. This is due to a declining investment in educational systems and the exponential growth of immigration into and migration across the EU. The challenges identified in Europe included the need to deal with exclusion (of migrants especially people from non-EU countries and other vulnerable groups), the need to focus on integration issues (increased motivation, employment opportunities and active

citizenship) and the need to strengthen policy formulation through learning exchanges within the region and with other regions. In North America the need for higher-level skills is growing. More research is needed to learn how to build on existing skills and to change the adult literacy delivery system to provide a wide range of connected learning experiences.

E. 4. Latin America and the Caribbean: Maria Luisa Jareguil (UNESCO Santiago) and Maria Clara Di Pierrro (Alternate Member of the Literacy National Commission of Brazil).

In Latin America and the Caribbean generally literacy rates are high although there are pockets where illiteracy rates are serious issues (Haiti 53.2% illiteracy, Nicaragua, 32.5%, Honduras 23.8%, Guatemala 21.3%). Illiteracy is related to age, income, and ethnicity. Male underachievement is common especially in the Caribbean, and there are issues of gender parity in the elder and indigenous populations.

The presentation described work in Argentina, Bermuda, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela. All of these countries perceive literacy as part of local and national development strategies; all promote decentralization and multi-sectoral cooperation; and all promote EFA and lifelong learning. Literacy is linked to life skills, citizenship and work, and the training of teachers is considered a key instrument in enhancing the quality of education. However, investment in this sector is not adequate in the Region. In most countries, literacy programmes are implemented in collaboration with NGOs, or by NGOs independently. Literacy data and training facilities for literacy workers are still inadequate. More effort is needed in the countries that might not reach Dakar Goal 4, especially in Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti.

E.5. Asia-Pacific: Mr. Kiichi Oyasu (UNESCO Bangkok) and Ms. Maria Khan (Asian/South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education).

This paper provided an analysis of literacy and Non-formal education in the EFA Action Plans of 19 countries of the region. A variety of strategies from advocacy campaigns, to accreditation and equivalency programmes, to policy reforms are being adopted. Delivery mechanisms vary from Community Learning Centres, to reading corners, learning circles, self-help training groups and ICT-based delivery systems. Common issues are limited human and financial resources, the need for capacity building through the training of practitioners and teachers, and issues of providing access for an increasing number of learners. EFA National Action plans show that with specific targeted groups strategies should focus particularly on advocacy, literacy and life skills provision as well as on the out-of-school population.

E. 6. Discussion of Agenda 2:

After comments and questions the rapporteur identified five key points for consideration:

- 1) The need for stronger linkages between practitioners (CSO, NGOs, etc.) who understand the needs of learners and the governments responsible for funding and policies to support them.

- 2) The importance of sharing of good practices within and outside national and regional boundaries.
- 3) The need for capacity building by enhancing the skills of literacy practitioners/trainers, of facilitators of literacy programmes and of NGO providers. Ways also need to be found to enhance the literacy awareness and knowledge of government officials.
- 4) The need to strengthen NFE and the linkages between NFE and formal Education systems.
- 5) The need for appropriate mechanisms for data collection, management and processing.

F. Agenda 3: Setting up UNLD benchmarks to monitor and evaluate UNLD Progress: quantitative and qualitative measurement.

The Moderator for this session was Ms. Pamela Baxter; the Rapporteur Pascale Micheau assisted by Margarete Sachs-Israel.

F. 1. “The Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP)” - Denise Livesley, Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Montreal.

The current the weaknesses in the methods used to gather literacy data are that they are usually based on general household or population census data reliant on self-assessments or on educational proxies as measures of literacy attainment. Consequently, UIS and its partners decided to establish the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring programme (LAMP) using methods pioneered in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and refined in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) with one important distinction. LAMP expands the survey range and level of discrimination at the low end of the scale to better capture literacy skills levels in developing countries where the literacy of the general population is lower than in developed nations. As in IALS, LAMP tests reading, writing and numeracy.

The LAMP model and the conceptual framework required for the project permit comparability between languages. LAMP will collect data to develop and evaluate national policies and to report on international goals, and will help countries build capacities in data collection and use of data. The strategy is to pilot LAMP in a few countries while developing a strategy to “scale up” to more countries. The focus is on functional literacy, the capability to understand, use and produce text in everyday life. Direct assessment provides a sharper portrait of a country’s literacy levels. The principle to be followed is that the test should be in the dominant language of communication but could also be in selected non-dominant languages. There are countries in the world where those considerations might be overturned by political priorities.

F.2. A Draft Proposal to Establish a Guide to Benchmark, Monitor Progress and Report on the Results of United Nations Literacy Decade – James Page, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Mr. Page was commissioned by UNESCO to prepare a proposal for a Guide to strengthen member states’ ability to measure, monitor and report on progress towards

UNLD goals. The proposed Guide had three suggested purposes: to establish where countries are now with respect to UNLD goals; to provide tools to measure and monitor progress towards those goals; and to suggest strategies to report comparable results during and at the end of the Decade. He reviewed existing data collection, monitoring and reporting efforts suggesting that the Guide could be limited to subjects not presently covered by current information and data collection activities. The Guide would include models and guidelines to do baseline studies and assessments to establish indicators to monitor progress and to take corrective actions; to use appropriate approaches for data collection, aggregation and analysis; and to report national and regional results. Given that each country would have a different approach, different proprieties and different systems of delivery, the design of the proposed Guide would have to be very “user friendly”: clearly presented and uncomplicated requiring little, if any, additional technical support.

F.3. Discussion on Agenda 3:

Comments were made about the difficulty of comparing self-assessment results with LAMP results. Research shows biases in self-assessment in that those who do not use their skills tend to overestimate them. Another observation was that the assessment of uses of literacy is equally important to determine what literacy skills are needed. One question posed was “How can we convince macro economists to invest in literacy?” In response, Ms. Lievesley said to convince macro economists requires sound data, and that is the purpose of LAMP.

Regarding the paper on Benchmarking, one suggestion was that since the six UNLD Areas of Action are processes then the focus should be on process and outcome indicators rather than input indicators. Another wondered if countries cannot fund work to achieve the goals set for the Decade, how willing would they be to spend money on monitoring and assessment? It was suggested that the Guide be limited to 3 or 4 specific indicators. Those indicators should be spelled out, not left for countries to determine. The EFA Global Monitoring Report could be used to report on all EFA related matters, including the UNLD.

G. Agenda Item 4: Literacy and Developments with a Focus on Gender within the Framework of the UNLD.

Annka Lumikari moderated the April 6th portion of the agenda. Mr. Ahlin Byll-Cataria moderated the portion held on the morning of April 7th. The Rapporteur was Mr. Digby Swift assisted by Namtip Aksornkool.

G.1. “Decade of Literacy: UNHCR Education” – Ms. Pamela Baxter.

“Saving life” not “quality of life” is UNHCR’s principle concern when dealing with refugees and persons displaced due to war or other disasters. There are guidelines for educational efforts in the field but education is not accepted as part of emergency response and there is no provision of education in transit camps for the first three months of a refugee’s stay. Due to pressures of time there is often insufficient collaboration between UNHCR and sister agencies. The International Network for

Education in Emergencies (INEE) has gathered statistics on enrolments, attendance and retention in refugee settings but the picture is both bleak and incomplete. Teachers are often refugees themselves and many if not most lack formal training. The UNHCR Peace Education programme (PEP) probably is the closest thing to literacy and life skills that the Agency supports.

G.2. “Literacy Developments: A Focus on Gender in the Framework of the UNLD” – Mr. Cooper Dawson, Senior Advisor, UNICEF, New York.

UNICEF’s current focus is on the education of girls given that more than half of all children out of school are females and almost two-thirds of illiterate adults are women. For UNICEF the education of girls is a human rights issue and a development issue. The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees all children a quality education. UNICEF has found positive benefits associated with the education of girls including a reduction in the rate of child mortality and improved maternal health.

UNICEF’s supports school-based programmes; non-formal education for youth often related to adolescent health and HIV/AIDS; women’s literacy linked to early child care practices, micro-finance, agriculture and other income generating activities; the capacity development of literacy trainers; and support for the strengthening of literacy assessment. Examples of projects UNICEF is supporting on “Literacy, Girls and Women” during the 2002-2004 biennium include: literacy for women linked to integrated early childcare programmes; literacy for young girls and women in ethnic minorities; literacy and learning for young children and adolescents; literacy linked to life skills and other programmes; literacy as a bridge to continuous learning; literacy for women linked to vocational skills, income generating activities and management training; and literacy in countries in humanitarian crisis or conflict situations.

G.3. “UNFPA’s Contribution to the UNLD Activities” – Circulated without presentation, prepared by Ms. Delia Barcelona, Senior Technical Support Officer UNFPA, New York.

The paper was distributed to participants but not formally presented. UNFPA’s mandate and programme priorities are anchored in the plan of action created by the [International Conference on Population and Development](#) (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. The [Programme of Action](#) adopted by 179 countries is a 20-year plan outlining these objectives: (a) to achieve universal access to quality education, in particular to primary and technical education and job training; (b) to combat illiteracy (the eradication of which is one of the prerequisites of human development) and to eliminate gender disparities in educational opportunities and support; (c) to promote non-formal education for young people; and (d) to introduce and improve the content of the curriculum so as to promote greater responsibility towards and awareness of the interrelationships between population and sustainable development; health issues, including reproductive health; and gender equity. ICPD also recognized that eradication of illiteracy is one of the prerequisites for human development.

UNFPA support programmes have addressed both formal and non-formal education needs. Activities have focused mainly on secondary education especially for adolescents and youth (aged 10-24). Complementary efforts to mobilize community groups (e.g.

parents, teachers, local leaders) have been undertaken in many countries, mainly through advocacy campaigns and social mobilization initiatives. UNFPA advocates for basic education, including girls' education; the improvement of the quality of education through curriculum revision and/or the introduction of relevant content in the curriculum (population/family life, sexual health, HIV/AIDS, life skills, gender, human rights, etc.); the improvement of improved teacher training; the development of relevant educational materials; and the integration of education in all UNFPA programmes. Selected country level activities were described noting work being done in Bolivia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Pakistan, Jordan, and Mauritania among others.

G.4. “ALESCO’s Achievements and Strategies in the Field of Literacy and Adult Education in the Arab World” – Mr. Mongi Bousnina, Director-General, Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO).

The absolute number of illiterate people in the Arab region has grown steadily from about 50 million persons in 1970 to an estimated 70 million in 2003 due to a lack of political will to ensure access to universal primary education, a lack of support for adult learning and literacy, and problems of social underdevelopment.

ALESCO's literacy efforts include the establishment of an Arab Strategy for Adult Education published in 2001 and the design of the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education broadcasting programmes designed for women acquiring literacy and an advocacy programme called “Ana Al Awan” (“it is high time”).

ALESCO's future strategies include the promotion of legislation to recognize the importance of universal access to education, improving teachers' performance, improving the contents of teacher training programmes, encouraging continuous learning, and linking adult learning to specific purposes and needs.

Second Day, April 7th, 2004

Agenda Four continued with Cooper Dawson Chairing the morning session. Shigeru Aoyagi chaired the afternoon session. The Moderator was Mr. Ahlin Byll-Cataria, the Rapporteur Mr. Digby Swift assisted by Namtip Aksornkool.

G.5. “The World Food Programme, the United Nations Literacy Decade, Literacy and Gender”, Ms. Pascale Micheau, School Feeding Programme.

Education for All and gender are priorities for the WFP. By 2000 12.3 million children have been fed by the Global School Feeding Campaign. This figure had risen to 16 million by 2003. It is projected to rise to 32 million in 2005 and to 50 million by 2007.

School feeding is seen as an integral part of the entry of impoverished children into education and the Programme goal for the period 2004 to 2007 is to contribute to meeting the MDGs through food-assisted interventions for poor and hungry people. In doing so the programme has five strategic priorities: 1) saving lives in crisis situations; 2) protecting livelihoods in crisis situations and enhancing resilience to shocks; 3) supporting the improved nutritional health status of children and other vulnerable people; 4) supporting access to primary education and reducing gender disparity in access to

education; and 5) helping governments establish and manage national food assistance programmes. The WFP has set a target that 70% of participants in food-assisted training activities will be women and adolescent girls. Through its programmes it promotes life skills training including literacy and numeracy in countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and China.

G.6. “UN Literacy Decade: Some Comments for the CCNGO/EFA” – Carlos Zarco Mera, Consejo de Educacion de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL).

The CCNGO supports the UNLD as a way to promote the interrelationship between formal and non-formal education; between literacy and basic education; and between and amongst the different policy frameworks on education from Dakar to CONFINTEA V to the MDGs. CSOs are both providers of adult literacy and adult education and advocates for the literacy and learning needs of the poorest and excluded in societies. CSOs have a role in supporting local communities in their struggles for empowerment and social justice. This paper recommended that CSOs put literacy at the centre of their efforts, that they use their capacities and experiences to advance literacy goals and track progress at the local level; that they work to ensure that the EFA National Action Plans include adult literacy targets; and that they are resourced to ensure quality.

UNESCO CCNGO/EFA is building ways to engage CSOs in policy engagement. Different regional and international groups are undertaking capacity-building programmes of their own to track progress on girls' and women's education and literacy (ASPBAE, ANCCEFA, CEAAL, ARC, Global Campaign on Education and ICAE).

G.7. “The NICHD Research Program in Reading Disorders and Reading Instruction” – Dr. G. Reid Lyon, National Institute of Child Health and Human development (NIH).

Dr. Lyon stated that literacy actions have been driven more by politics and philosophy than by scientific research. At NIH reading failure is viewed as both an educational and a public health problem. Research has demonstrated that reading proficiency is critical to academic learning and to success in school, and that the ability to read proficiently affects quality of life and health outcomes. The key research questions for NIH are: How do children learn to read? Why do some children have difficulties learning to read? How can we prevent reading difficulties? How can we remediate reading difficulties?

Statistics show that an unacceptable number of children in the U.S. cannot read proficiently. For certain minority groups the situation is extreme. Evidence-based policy initiatives are gaining attention in the United States. The “No Child left behind Act” and the Reading First Legislation, significantly increased the U.S. Federal investment in scientifically based reading instruction for the early grades.

G.8. Discussion on Agenda 4:

The rapporteur noted that almost all partner agencies treat literacy as a priority and that all partners should attempt to share information and responsibility more effectively.

There was considerable concern about gender issues and the importance of focussing on girls and women. Mothers' literacy should be given greater emphasis as a key to children's literacy. Programme and materials should include post-literacy and continuing education elements. There was agreement on the centrality and importance of literacy research.

H. Agenda 5: Enhancing the Mechanisms to Accelerate, Monitor and Report on UNLD Progress.

The Moderator was Ahlin Byll-Cataria, the Rapporteur Carlos Zarco Mera assisted by Suzanne Schnuttgen.

H.1. “What Can the Global Monitoring Report do for the UNLD?” – Mr. Jan Van Ravens, EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, UNESCO.

GMR topics and dates are proposed as follows: EFA general report in 2002; GMR on gender in 2003/4; in 2005 Quality; in 2006 Literacy; in 2007 the topic is to be decided; and in 2008 the GMR is to be devoted at least in part to gender. The GMR team plans to have the Literacy report drafted by June of 2005 and to be through the translation and production phases for publication by early autumn 2005.

The Literacy report is likely to address the debate on measurement and monitoring at the meta-level, and should enhance our understanding of what counts and what works in literacy. The discrepancies between the older models of literacy measurement and the emerging models of direct literacy assessment as seen in IALS/ALL and as being adapted to LAMP were discussed. In IALS there had been a criterion of level three performance as being adequate for functional purposes in developed nations. Van Ravens questioned if that threshold would be valid in the context of the developing world. He also noted that we have not been consistent in our articulation of literacy goals. At Jomtien the world spoke of halving illiteracy, in Dakar about a 50% improvement in literacy, and the UNLD speaks of “significant progress and “recognizable increases”. The extent to which life skills are included in the UNLD agenda is also unclear.

H.2. “UNLD 2003 Progress report: Draft for Discussion” – James Page, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Prior to the Consultation, a copy of the 50-page first draft of the UNLD Progress Report was circulated to participants. Page presented the document and invited comments and additions. Additional input was invited by no later than May 1st, 2004.

This draft was organized into five chapters beginning with the Introduction. The second chapter “Where we stand...” is designed to enlighten the public about both the importance of literacy and of the challenges the world faces as a result of a lack of literacy, and of low or insufficient literacy. The third chapter details the various UNLD launch activities that took place at the national, regional and international levels. Chapter four references a broad range of projects currently underway that exemplify the kinds of things that can be done to meet the aims and objectives set for the Decade. The

final Chapter in the Report is devoted to conclusions and recommendations related to aligning the policy agenda; reporting on results and generating increased UNLD momentum.

H.3. Discussion on Agenda Five:

The rapporteur drew the following conclusions from participant comments. There is a need to find ways to create the best possible synergy between different monitoring mechanisms/tools for UNLD reporting. These approaches should involve all stakeholders in the development of the different reports (i.e. GMR/EFA, MDG, CONFINTEA, UNLD). Monitoring should include contextual issues going beyond goal 4 to address multiple literacies (beyond “alphabet” literacy), despite the complexity of its measurement.

With respect to the UNLD Progress Report the document should be clear about its intended audiences: the UN Assembly, policy makers and planners. One participant suggested that chapter 4 should be structured around what is happening in the different action areas of the UNLD Plan of Action (policy, capacity building, literate environments etc.). Another comment suggested that chapter 5 should not only include conclusions, but lessons learned and recommendations from practice. Participants favoured special attention to the issue of gender and literacy.

I. Agenda 6: “Integrating UNLD Goals into the Framework of EFA, MDGs and the FTI”

The Moderator for this session was Ms. Denise Livesley and the Rapporteur was Lilia Iskandar assisted by M. Dada.

I.1. “UNLD Action Plan and Global EFA Related Initiatives: Creating an Agenda of Synergy”, Mr. R. Govinda, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India.

There is a need to view EFA goals in an integrated fashion, as a “compact” of common concerns and convergent interests focussed on the UNLD. Literacy policies and programmes today require a renewed vision of literacy that goes beyond imparting basic literacy and numeracy skills. The UNLD should focus on three priorities. The first is to reach non-literate youth and adults, especially women, who have not acquired adequate literacy skills for personal development and improved quality of life. Continuing education should be at the heart of any strategy to reach these groups, especially those aged 15 to 24, with the main objective being to increase the productive capacity of youth. The second priority is gender equity and women’s empowerment. The third priority to link basic education with poverty alleviation efforts, a core concern of the MDGs and several other flagship programmes. The objective could be to promote collective action through self-help groups in rural areas and for workers involved in the information aspects of production. Governments have to revisit their EFA National Plans of Action to ensure that the focus is not on simply reducing illiteracy rates.

I.2. “Education for All by 2015: UNESCO’s Coordination and Monitoring Role” – Mr. Abhimanyu Singh, EFA International Coordination Unit, UNESCO.

UNESCO has refocused its education programme to place EFA at the heart of its work. As a result, during the biennium 2004/5, 80% of UNESCO’s Education Sector’s budget is being devoted to EFA and 70% of that budget is decentralized into the various cluster offices. The four key roles UNESCO is playing in EFA are: to maintain the political momentum, coordinate with EFA partners, contribute directly to achieving the six goals, and monitoring progress towards EFA objectives.

EFA Flagship Initiatives concentrate on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education; Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE); the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities; **Education for Rural People** (ERP) led by FAO; Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis; Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH); Teachers and the Quality of Education; the 10-year United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative; and Literacy Trends in partnerships indicate that there are improved and more strategic relations between the World Bank, UNICEF, NGOs and donors. The EFA partnership is broadening and there is strengthened collaboration with civil society mainly through the CCNGOs on EFA (now numbering 600 NGOs) and through EFA Week activities.

I.3. Preliminary Discussion on Agenda 6 Items I.1. and I.2.:

There was some discussion about the broadening of the definition of literacy and one participant asked how it is possible to inspire the political will required to support enhanced literacy if we continue to broaden the concept to the point that it is no longer easy to comprehend or define. In a similar vein, another pointed out that the central issue is increasingly becoming one of access to resources. Every effort should be made to get adult literacy on the agenda of the G8, which will be chaired by Prime Minister Blair in 2005. A further comment was made that the focus of efforts must be at the national level and involve the engagement of NGOs of CSOs.

After lunch was Agenda 6 continued with Denise Lievesley as Moderator and Lilia Iskander as Rapporteur assisted by M. Dada.

I.4. “UNLD Consultative Meeting” Cornelia Batchi, German Technical Cooperation, Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

The GTZ contributes to the MDGs and the EFA Action Plan through its strong commitment to formal and non-formal basic education as a major component in poverty-reduction strategies. The GTZ Programme of Action is designed to make economies more dynamic and expand the active participation of the poor through vocational training especially for women and youth. It is designed to ensure basic social services and the strengthening of those social services by supporting basic education, health and nutrition, by ensuring a safe water supply and by HIV/AIDS prevention. The Programme also strengthens good governance by ensuring the involvement of the disadvantaged and by strengthening respect for human rights and labour standards in partnership with civil society.

GTZ focuses its aid on financial, technical, and human resource cooperation as well as through Food, Emergency and Refugee aid. Its experience has been that non-formal education has many development benefits: it affords disadvantaged groups with access to quality basic education opening the door to lifelong learning; it enables independent access to information, participation in democratic processes and the implementation of decentralized governance models; it improves access to employment opportunities; it allows parents and communities to participate more actively in the processes of planning and sustainability; it enables learners to join formal learning opportunities.

**I.5. “The World Bank and Adult Literacy and Education: Building Linkages.”
Maman Sidikow, Senior Education Specialist, World Bank, Washington.**

The Bank sees the UNLD as an opportunity to enhance poverty through a process anchored in multilateralism and views gender as integral to all of the goals set in the various global covenants (EFA, MDGs, FTI and UNLD). It believes that it is impossible to meet these commitments without paying close attention to the different needs, constraints and opportunities of both women and men. WB staff are now encouraged to integrate gender into both country and global programmes. He said that the MDGs, as a focus for the WB, provide yardsticks to measure and accelerate progress. Finally, the WB plans to play an active role promoting gender issues in both the EFA and FTI as a reminder that gender issues are integral to all goals not only MDG 3 which is to “Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women.”

The Bank has adopted “Integrating Gender into the World Bank – A Strategy for Action” which involves periodic country gender assessments; an analysis of gender dimensions of development across sectors; the identification of country-specific gender related poverty reduction and women’s empowerment strategies; and the development and implementation of WB operational interventions including a monitoring of results. The Bank’s 2003/4 UNLD related activities include twenty-five country gender assessments (including education issues) completed since launching the strategy

The Bank has produced two draft papers on the cost and financing of adult education programmes, and on public-private partnerships in the delivery of adult education. The “outsourcing” study of Senegal’s *faire-faire* experience has been completed. Future plans call for the “Reaching the 900+ million” study to be completed and presented at the Conference sponsored by the WB, UIE and IZZ-DVV at the University of Botswana in June 2004. A paper on “Adult Education and Local Capacity Building”, with sponsorship of the UIE/WB-Norwegian Trust Fund, is in preparation.

**I.6. “ Promoting Literacy in the African Development Bank”, Ms. Margaret Kilo,
Education Specialist, Temporary relocation Agency, Tunis.**

The African Development Bank (ADB) has a mandate for poverty reduction through the promotion of literacy working on three key areas: primary education (including girls’ education), adult Literacy and numeracy, and the promotion of vocational and technical training. In Africa more children (57%) are of school than in school, and adult illiteracy rates are rising. Within the ADB support for literacy is not limited to education but also

includes projects in agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, water, institutional capacity building, gender and development, and so on.

However this fragmented approach constitutes a weakness rather than strength because efforts are diffused, monitoring is weak, and there is an inability to demonstrate the effectiveness of financing such a wide range of projects. Other constraints include the fact that there is little expertise in literacy within the Bank, there is a dearth of data on Literacy rates, there is consequently weak analysis of problems, poorly designed interventions and no evaluation of outcomes or impact. Further, the failure of mass literacy campaigns in the 60's and 70's convinced many macro-economists that an investment in literacy is a waste of resources. Consequently, it was noted, there are few champions for literacy in multi-lateral financing institutions.

I.7. “JICA’s Cooperation in the field of Non-Formal Education” – Naoki Umemiya, Resident Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Paris, France.

This presentation began with an overview of JICA and its interests in education. It has five priority goals: the quantitative expansion of primary and secondary education; the qualitative improvement of these systems; reduction of gender disparities; the promotion of non-formal education for the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and life skills; and, finally, the improvement of educational management.

With respect to NFE, JICA’s strategy has seven development goals. Two were described. The first goal is the improvement of the educational environment: increasing access and raising quality. The second NFE goal is the improvement of health care and sanitation. JICA’s approach to NFE is based on a set of principles that include: the need to understand local needs and characteristics; the need to ensure community participation; the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to cooperation; the importance of working closely with national and international NGOs; the value of cooperating with and coordinating with UN organizations and other donor agencies; and finally a willingness to introduce Japanese experiences where they are relevant.

JICA is convinced, based on its experiences, that: NFE can greatly contribute to ensuring a “human-centred development” within national development programmes; basic education plays a critical role in achieving human security as illiteracy is one major source of that insecurity

I.8. “DFID’s Support for Literacy in Africa and Asia”, Ms. Halima Begum, Department for International Development (DFID), Government of the United Kingdom.

DFID’s new Literacy and Livelihood strategy, “Improving the livelihood of the poor is the role of literacy” strives for an approach that puts literacy into contexts that poor people see as relevant to their lives. The focus is on the learner. Some of the challenges that DFID is focussed on include linking literacy practices with HIV/AIDS education, avoiding blueprints or standardized approaches through programmes that are flexible and responsive to demand, working with international partners to ensure that a coordinated approach to the MDGs is achieved through literacy, and finding better ways to measure

progress towards literacy targets. DFID-supported projects in Asia include work in India, China and Bangladesh as well as South Africa and Egypt.

I.9. Mr. Ole Briseid, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Norway to UNESCO

Norway is committed to the MDGS and is interested in an integrated results-based plan with a comprehensive reporting system on all six EFA goals. Norway worries that so many countries are lagging behind in the attainment of these goals. This calls for strong action and the need to strengthen international cooperation and coordination. Norway is especially concerned about reducing the gap between rich and poor nations and is increasing its development aid to 1% of GDP by 2005. Education is seen as an agent of change and development, and progress in education is a pre-condition for social and economic development. Priority is being given to the educational needs of girls and women with expenditures on female education projects rising from 7% in 2002 to 15% of total foreign aid spending by 2005.

During the UNLD Norway will place strong emphasis on the attainment of EFA goals and will increase support for literacy programmes, especially those designed for women. Norway believes that UNESCO's focus should be on the 800-900 million illiterates in the world and offered four recommendations: the need for a coordinated leadership structure for the Decade, the need to ensure literacy goals are integrated into EFA National Action Plans, the need to ensure that monitoring indicators are in line with EFA Goals and the GMR, and finally that one report on progress, the GMR, would probably be sufficient.

I.10. Mr. Anders Falk, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Sweden to UNESCO.

Both the MDGs and the UNLD are seen in Sweden as ways to strengthen the drive towards the EFA goals. Swedish SIDA is one of the few donor agencies that have consistently supported a role in development for adult education. It has recently adopted a new policy on cooperation in education under the banner "the enhanced right of education for all". Formal education alone, however, is insufficient and there is a need for increased attention to youth and adult literacy needs especially through NFE means. Each country should have its own EFA strategy and that responsibility for reaching the EFA goals should rest squarely on the shoulders of the state.

J. Closing Remarks by Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO.

Mr. Matsuura stated that UNESCO sees the Decade as a stimulus to literacy action and as an opportunity to raise awareness about the global literacy challenge. He stressed the importance of literacy within the Framework of EFA emphasizing that the goals are interconnected and that a holistic approach to them is required.

He warned that we must not confine our attention to adults, saying that our concern for literacy must also extend to early childhood education and primary learning where the foundations for subsequent learning are laid. He noted that in the United States, for example, early reading programmes have drawn upon extensive research into how

children and adults learn to read. Furthermore teachers are being trained not only in how to teach children to read but also how to undertake the early diagnosis and correction of reading problems. Other countries, he noted, also have important experience to share and he observed that the UNLD should be a vehicle for encouraging this exchange of good practices and innovation.

He said he sensed that the global literacy situation faces a certain paradox. On the one hand we have been aware of that literacy and non-formal learning suffer from an under-reporting of activities, initiatives and achievements. On the other hand there is a growing recognition that the official statistics, which are generally based on self-reporting within national census processes, systematically underestimate the scale of the literacy challenge and misjudge its complexity. He stressed the importance of the consultation's discussion of monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking.

His commented on the importance of promoting partnerships and work at the national level noting that international partners must focus attention on the development national commitments to eradicate illiteracy.

K. Agenda 7: Wrap-up discussion and recommendations for advancing the UNLD.

The Moderator for this session was Ms. Maria Lourdes Almazan-Khan; the Rapporteur was Ms. Maria Clara Di Pierro assisted by Ms. Maria Malevri. The Moderator opened the floor for discussion and debate. These are the key points that were raised.

1. While the UNLD should promote an expanded notion of literacy, the focus of the Decade should be on the both the basic and functional aspects of literacy, especially for the "900 million +" adults who are not literate. .
2. Literacy should be defined as the ability to function effectively socially, culturally, economically and politically rather than as a set number of years of schooling. As well, the linkages between literacy and other areas such as health and family need to be stressed.
3. Keeping in mind that the UNLD promotes "literacy for all"- both for those inside and outside of school, there is a pressing need to convey a strong message about the importance of adult learning and literacy especially of a Non-formal nature.
4. A strong emphasis should be put on the education and training of the deliverers, managers and administrators of literacy programmes and educational systems.
5. In order to increase resources for literacy, UNESCO should work to engage regional development banks more in supporting the aims and activities of the UNLD.
6. UNESCO should undertake an effort to assess the costs of eliminating illiteracy so that both public and private funding agents can appreciate the level of investment required to meet the targets set for the UNLD and can realize a value-added outcome for their expenditures.

7. There is need for a more critical view of what does and does not work in the field of literacy delivery as well as for assessments of well-functioning small-scale approaches that might be successfully adapted to larger scale operations.
8. Promoting and safeguarding indigenous and local languages should be carefully considered in all literacy work so that advancing literacy does not imply compromising languages that are currently under pressure or threat of extinction.
9. Literacy needs to be clearly included in and given priority in National EFA Action Plans.
10. The UNLD should be characterised by a bottom-up strategy based on the needs of those working in the field, rather than by a top-down approach driven solely by macro concerns.
11. The “ownership” of and responsibilities for the UNLD should be clearly defined.
12. *How* and *to whom* UNLD progress should be reported needs to be clarified along with the manner in which reports are to be made. Consideration should be given to using established instruments like the GMR for UNLD reporting purposes.
13. New technologies need to be harnessed to support literacy developments.
14. NGO and CSO communities need to be actively involved in policy dialogues, and the resources that these organizations and the academic community represent should be used more fully in realizing UNLD goals. .
15. There is a need for a more integrated UNLD plan of action, specifying the lines of action to be taken at the country, UN agency and UNESCO levels.
16. The cooperation between UN agencies needs to be enhanced.
17. A greater sense of urgency should characterize efforts to promote the importance of literacy to the world community if the UNLD is to realize its full potential.

The consultation adjourned at 17:30.

Annex 1:



United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) Consultative Meeting
(UNESCO, Paris, Room 10, 6-7 April 2004)



Proposed Agenda

DAY 1 Tuesday, 6 April

Chairperson (AM): Ms Aicha Bah Diallo, Deputy Assistant Director-General for Education

Chairperson (PM): Mr. Adama Ouane, Director, UIE

0900 - 0930 Registration

0930 - 1015 Opening of the Meeting

- Welcome address by Mr. John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education
- Brief introduction of participants
- Orientation of the meeting and adoption of the agenda, chairpersons, rapporteurs

1015 - 1045 **Agenda 1:** Overview of the UNLD progress in 2003-2004
Presentation:

	Presenter	Organization
1	Mr Shigeru Aoyagi	Section of Literacy and Non-formal Education, UNESCO

1045 - 1100 Tea break

1100 - 1300 **Agenda 2:** Regional Presentation "Issues and challenges in achieving UNLD goals: Where we stand and where we go?" - **Moderator: M. Sidikou; Rapporteur: J. Comings; Assist. Rapporteur: S. Rahman**

Joint presentation: 15 minutes each

	Region	UNESCO Regional Focal Points	Regional Resouce Persons
1	Africa	Mr Martina Simeti (UNESCO Dakar)	Mr Ahlin Byll-Cataria (Association for the Development of Education in Africa)

2	Asia	Mr Kiichi Oyasu (UNESCO Bangkok)	Ms Maria Khan (Asian / South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education)
3	LAC	Ms Maria Luisa Jaregui (UNESCO Santiago)	Ms María Clara Di Pierro (Alternate Member of the Literacy National Commission)
4	Arab States	Ms Nour Dajani (UNESCO Beirut)	Ms Lalia Iskandar (Community and Institutional Development)
5	Eur/ N. America	Ms Carol Medel- Anouevo (UNESCO Institute for Education)	Mr John Comings (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy)

1330 - 1500 Lunch hosted by UNESCO

1500 - 1630 **Agenda 3:** Setting up UNLD benchmarks to monitor and evaluate UNLD progress: Quantitative measurement and qualitative measurement
Moderator: P. Baxter Rapporteur: P. Micheau; Assist. Rapporteur: M. Sachs-Israel

Presentation: 15 minutes each

	Presenter	Organization/ Function
1	Ms Denise Lievesley	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
2	Mr James Page	International Expert

1630 - 1745 Tea break

1745 - 1800 **Agenda 4:** "Literacy and Developments with focus on gender in the framework of UNLD" Moderator: D. Swift; Rapporteur: N. Aksornkool

Presentation: 10 minutes each

	Presenter	Organization/ Function
1	Ms Pamela Baxter	UNHCR
2	Mr Cooper Dawson	UNICEF

3	Mr Miloud Habibi	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
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1800 UNESCO cocktail – reception at the lobby area in front of Room 10

Agenda 4 continues following day

DAY 2 Wednesday, 7 April

Chairperson (AM): Mr C. Dawson, Senior Education Advisor UNICEF
 Chairperson (PM): Mr S. Aoyagi, Chief, Literacy and NFE Section, UNESCO

0900 - 1030 **Continued: Agenda 4** "Literacy and Developments with focus on gender in the framework of UNLD" *Moderator : To be identified and selected, Rapporteur: To be identified and selected. Rapporteur: N. Aksornkool*
 Presentation: 10 minutes each

	Presenter	Organization/ Function
1	Ms Pascale Micheau	WFP
2	Mr Carlos Zarco Mera (Representative of CCNGOs)	Consejo de Educacion de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL)
3	Mr G. Reid Lyon	National Institutes of Health Human Learning and Learning Disabilities

1030- 1115 **Agenda 5:** Enhancing the mechanism to accelerate monitor and report UNLD progress - *Moderator: :J-M Cataria; Rapporteur: C Zarco Mera; Assist. Rapporteur: S. Schnuttgen*

Presentation 15 minutes

	Presenter	Organization/ Function
1	Mr Jan Van Ravens	Global Monitoring Report Team of EFA
2	Mr James Page	International Expert

1115-1130 Tea break

1130-1215 **Continued Agenda 5:** Enhancing the mechanism to accelerate monitor and report UNLD progress

1215-1300 **Agenda 6:** Integrating UNLD goals in the framework of EFA, MDGs and FTI. - *Moderator: D. Lievesley; Rapporteur: L. Iskandar; Assist. Rapporteur: M. Dada*

Presentation 10 minutes

	Presenter	Organization/ Function
1	Mr R Govinda	International Expert
2	Mr Abhimanyu Singh	EFA International Co-ordination Unit, UNESCO

1300 - 1400 Lunch break

1400 - 1600 **Agenda 6:** Integrating UNLD goals in the framework of EFA, MDGs and FTI - *Moderator: J-M Cataria; Rapporteur: L. Iskandar; Assist. Rapporteur: M. Dada*

Presentation: 10 minutes

	Presenter	Organization/ Function
1	Mr Maman Sidikou	World Bank
2	Ms Margarete Kilo	African Development Bank
3	Mr Naoki Umemiya	JICA
4	Ms Cornelia Batchi	GTZ
5	Ms Halma Begum	DFID
6	Ms Esther Rubio Herráez	Ministry of Education, Spain
7	Mr Ole Briseid	Permanent Delegation of Norway to UNESCO
8	Mr Anders Falk	Permanent Delegation of Sweden to UNESCO

*5, 6 and 7: no powerpoint presentation. 5 minutes intervention

1600 - 1615 Tea break

1615 –1630 **Remarks by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO**

1630 - 1730 **Agenda 7:** Wrap up discussion and recommendations for advancing UNLD - *Moderator: M-L Khan; Rapporteur: M-C di Pierro; Assist. Rapporteur: M. Malevri*

1730 Closing

Annex 2



United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all
Consultative Meeting
(Room 10, UNESCO Headquarters, 6-7 April 2004)



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Ms Régine Thomas
Ms/Mr C.Veasna. Malterre
Mr Frédéric Leroy
Ms/Mr NTai Drame
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UNESCO

UNESCO Regional Focal Points

Organization	Name	Note
UNESCO Santiago Office/ Education Regional Bureau	Ms María Luisa JAREGUI	Programme Specialist
UNESCO Bangkok Office/ Education Regional Bureau	Mr Kiichi OYASU	Programme Specialist
UNESCO Beirut Office/ Education Regional Bureau	Ms Nour DAJANI SHEHABI	Programme Specialist
UNESCO Dakar Office/ Education Regional Bureau	Ms Martina SIMETI	Programme Specialist
UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg	Ms Carolyn MEDEL- ANONUEVO	Programme Specialist

UNESCO HQs

Colleagues from the Education Sector, Culture Sector, Communication and Information Sector, Bureau of Strategic Planning and External Relations and Co-operation and Office of the Director-General.

Secretariat

Section for Literacy and Non-formal Education, Division of Basic Education, Education Sector
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Annex 3:



UNLD Consultative Meeting



General Information

UNESCO Basic Education Division (ED/BAS) will organize the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) Consultative Meeting in Paris from 6 to 7 April 2004 in cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), Hamburg as follows:

1. Objectives

- 1.1. To review UNLD progress and discuss future strategy for advancing UNLD at international and regional levels
- 1.2. To design a mechanism to accelerate, monitor and report UNLD progress
- 1.3. To make recommendations to achieve the UNLD goals

2. Provisional agenda

- Agenda 1: **Overview of UNLD progress 2003-2004**
Agenda 2: **Issues and challenges in achieving UNLD goals at regional levels: Where we stand and where we go**
Agenda 3: **Setting up UNLD benchmarks to monitor and evaluate UNLD progress**
Agenda 4: **Literacy and Development with focus on 'Literacy and Gender', the UNLD sub-theme for 2003-2004 [UN agencies presentation and discussion]**
Agenda 5: **Enhancing the mechanism to accelerate, monitor, and report UNLD progress**
Agenda 6: **Integrating UNLD goals in the framework of EFA, MDG, and Fast Track Initiatives**
Agenda 7: **Recommendations for advancing UNLD**

3. Expected outcomes

- 3.1. **UNLD progress to be shared and the contents and production modality of the UNLD progress report to UN General Assembly to be determined (Agenda 1 and 5)**
- 3.2. **Issues and challenges in achieving UNLD goals identified in each region (Agenda 2)**
- 3.3. **Guidelines for setting up UNLD benchmarks discussed (Agenda 3)**
- 3.4. **Interactions between literacy and development issues in various areas discussed and inter-agencies collaboration in UNLD enhanced (Agenda 4 and 6)**

- 3.5. **Mechanism to accelerate, monitor, and report UNLD progress designed (Agenda 5)**
- 3.6. **UNLD International resource persons team formed (Agenda 2 and 5)**
- 3.7. **Recommendations made for achieving UNLD goals (Agenda 7)**

4. Date and venue

UNESCO HQs, Paris, Tuesday, 6 and Wednesday, 7 April 2004

5. Participants

- 5.1. **UN partners**
- 5.2. **Bi-/multi-lateral development agencies**
- 5.3. **CC/NGO representatives**
- 5.4. **Representatives of UNLD resource persons team (Africa, Arab States, Asia, and LAC)**
- 5.5. **International literacy experts**
- 5.6. **UNESCO**
 - 5.6.1. **Basic Education Division**
 - 5.6.2. **UNESCO Institutes including UIE, UIS, IBE**
 - 5.6.3. **UNESCO regional education bureaus**
 - 5.6.4. **EFA International Coordination Unit and EFA Monitoring Report Team**
 - 5.6.5. **Focal points in different Sectors in UNESCO**

6. Schedule of the Meeting

Refer to the separate document.

7. Working Language at the Meeting

English

8. Contact

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