

**Talking Points for ADG/ED
ECOSOC 2012 Coordination Segment
Panel I**

“Mobilizing partnerships for development, including in the field of education”

Global coordination of Education for All

- The Education for All (EFA) movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults by 2015. Since the World Conference on Education in Dakar in 2000, a number of strategic initiatives and cooperation frameworks have emerged, involving a broad range of EFA stakeholders, including governments, international and regional organizations, donors, development banks, civil society and the private sector.
- UNESCO was tasked in Dakar to coordinate these efforts and maintain the collaborative momentum. Over the years, UNESCO’s role has evolved in response to lessons learned and changes in the global landscape for development.
- In 2011, UNESCO reformed the global EFA coordination mechanism to ensure stronger linkages between national, regional and global EFA activities; mobilize more high-level political support for EFA through the creation of an annual EFA High-Level Forum; assess more vigorously progress towards EFA through an annual Global EFA Meeting; and ensure stronger strategic guidance through an EFA Steering Committee.
- UNESCO is using existing collaboration mechanisms for including civil society and the private sector in these structures to ensure effectiveness, ownership and accountability.
- Today, I would like to focus in particular on what UNESCO has and is doing to ensure the active engagement of civil society and the private sector in the EFA movement. This expansion of the EFA partnership is one of the most important innovations since Dakar.

Partnerships with civil society: CCNGO/EFA

- UNESCO believes that EFA will only be achieved if it is rooted in a broad-based societal movement and nourished by viable government/civil society partnerships.
- For UNESCO, civil society embraces NGOs and campaign networks, teacher unions and religious organizations, community associations and research

networks, parents associations and professional bodies, student organizations and women's groups.

- Civil society organizations perform four main roles in regard to EFA: (i) as alternative service providers where state-provided services are either absent or insufficient; (ii) as innovators and sources of new thinking and new practices; (iii) as informed critics and advocates; and (iv) as acknowledged in the World Education forum in Dakar, they also have a role as policy partners.
- UNESCO's coordination mechanism for partnerships with the civil society, the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO/EFA), was established in 1984 to facilitate dialogue with NGOs on the theme of basic education. It has since widened its membership and scope and now includes close to 300 national, regional and international member organisations.
- Through the CCNGO/EFA, UNESCO gives NGOs a space and a voice. We give them a space where they can come together to build a collective vision on education. We also give NGOs a voice, by ensuring that they are represented in the global EFA coordination mechanisms and in other international fora. For example, the CCNGO/EFA appoints two representatives in the newly established, 18 member strong EFA Steering Committee which provides strategic guidance on EFA.

Partnerships with the private sector:

- The private sector is not a new actor in the field of education. However, there is today a growing momentum to deepen and enhance its engagement, notably through public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Again the roles played by the private sector in education are multiple – as service provider, funder, innovator, policy-advisor and advocate.
- Technology companies have been particularly active within the EFA movement. For example, UNESCO is working with a number of companies to strengthen the utilization of new technologies for teacher training, literacy, skills development, and distance learning.
- In addition to bilateral partnerships on specific projects with individual companies or foundations, UNESCO endeavors to develop broader innovative partnership platforms with different constituencies.
- In May 2011, UNESCO set up a Global Partnership for Girls and Women's Education, bringing in a number of private sector partners.

- Earlier, in 2007, UNESCO and the World Economic Forum launched a joint initiative entitled “*Partnerships for Education*” (PfE) to foster, inform and facilitate the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships for education. This coalition of public and private partners committed to developing new and innovative models of partnerships in the education sector.
- Based on the experience of the past five years and to revitalize the framework of cooperation with the private sector in the field of EFA, the PfE initiative is currently in a phase of transition towards a Global Alliance of corporate partners for education, under the leadership of UNESCO.
- The Global Alliance is a global network of private sector organizations working together and with UNESCO to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the six EFA goals by 2015 and beyond. It is a global collaboration platform that provides a forum for policy dialogue, knowledge- and information-sharing, as well as joint and better coordinated actions and advocacy.

Some conclusions

- The global EFA coordination architecture, and the various partnerships and initiatives launched in support of education, have been successful in sustaining national political momentum and commitment to the EFA goals as well as influencing the global education agenda.
- The increased level of engagement of civil society and the private sector in policy dialogue can be seen as one of the successes of the global EFA coordination. However, at national level, the involvement of NGOs in meaningful policy dialogue is very varied and many governments are still reluctant to fully include them in decision-making. This is something that UNESCO will continue to encourage, in particular by supporting countries in carrying out an inclusive assessment of national EFA progress in the run up to 2015.