



**ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review
Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa**

**“The right to Education for All in Africa:
Reinforcing quality and equity”**

**Speech of Mrs. Ann Therese NDONG JATTA
DIRECTOR UNESCO BREDA**

**Lomé, Togo
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**SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR GILBERT FOSSOUN HOUNGBO,
PREMIER MINISTRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU TOGO**

**SON EXCELLENCE Mme ESSOSSIMNA LEGZIM-BALOUKI,
MINISTRE DES ENSEIGNEMENTS PRIMAIRE, SECONDAIRE, ET DE
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MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS LES MINISTRES D'ETATS MEMBRES,

**SON EXCELLENCE PROFESSEUR JEAN-PIEERE EZIN,
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NATIONS UNIES,**

MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS LES EXPERTS,

**HONORABLES INVITES,
MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS**

Je voudrais encore une fois exprimer ma profonde gratitude et celle de l'UNESCO au peuple et au Gouvernement togolais pour avoir accepté d'abriter la présente rencontre et leur dire combien nous sommes touchés par cette manifestation de solidarité, et par l'hospitalité et la chaleur de l'accueil depuis notre arrivée dans votre belle et coquette capitale, Lomé. Les actes posés constituent l'illustration parfaite de l'engagement du Gouvernement de la République du Togo et de sa détermination politique à faire avancer la cause de l'éducation.

L'atteinte des objectifs de l'Éducation pour Tous (EPT), des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement (OMD), des Objectifs de Développement Internationalement Acceptés (ODIA) d'ici 2015 dépendra, de toute évidence, du niveau d'engagement des gouvernements et des principaux acteurs ainsi que de la combinaison et de l'interaction d'une multitude de facteurs certains d'ordre endogène et exogène et d'autres d'ordre financier, humain, organisationnel, politique, culturel et matériel ou tout simplement éducatif sur lesquels il est impératif d'agir et le plus vite possible si nous voulons que tous les enfants africains sans distinction de sexe, de race, de couleur, de religion, d'ethnie, de statut social, de condition physique et d'origine géographique, ainsi que les jeunes et les adultes aient accès à une éducation de qualité tout au long de la vie. Ceci constitue une tâche ardue à laquelle nous devons continuer à nous atteler en vue d'obtenir des résultats probants à l'heure du bilan.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know the double focus of this year's ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review is on equity and quality education. This choice is relevant and timely because the concepts of equity,

right-based and educational quality have been for decades the biggest challenges African educational systems have been confronted with and which are instrumental for the achievement of the objectives at hand (EFA, MDGs and IADGs). In the EFA, MDGs and IADGs debate it is essential to get focused and further discuss concepts at hand and suggest practical solutions that can help accelerate the achievement of the goals by 2015. They are rights-based education, education investment and the education investment-educational quality nexus.

Education is a constitutional right but the gap between legal obligations and reality is too wide. The constitutions of the majority of African countries stipulate that education is free and compulsory. Despite this constitutional provision and political commitments, this right is not close to being fulfilled. Governments must make more commitment to create a right-based education system that underscores not only access but quality learning both for the socio-economic development of the individual and the nation.

However if the measure of governments' or development partners commitment in financial terms is examined there are gaps to be filled

Investment in education

- Public expenditures on education in Africa represented only 2.5 percent of the world budget allocated to the sector in 2010, UNESCO GMR (2010). This rate is 28 percent for the United States and Western Europe. This gives us an idea of the magnitude of what remains to be done.
- There is a strong variation regarding the scope and magnitude of total education investment for sub-Saharan

African countries. With comparable Gross Domestic Product (GDP), they do not allocate the same level of resources to education.

- According to UNESCO EFA GMR (2010), sub-Saharan African countries spend roughly 167 USD per child per year in primary education compared to a minimum of 1,000 USD in the United States and Western Europe.
- There is a wide variation between African countries regarding their financial investment portfolio to education, regardless of the size of their GDP or national budget. Education does not constitute the top priority on the agenda of most if not all countries.
- For example, in 2005, while the DRC allocated 0.4 percent of its GDP to education this ratio was 9.6 percent for Lesotho.

If it is true that the resources committed to education are an investment in the future of the individual, as well as an investment toward national development goals and priorities, then more investment should be made in education. After all an investment in education is a productive investment and has long term returns for both the individual and society.

Thus the share of education in the national budget obviously reflects the importance given to the education sector in the country. A reference of 20 percent has been established on the basis of analysis of countries which have attained or are close to attaining universal primary education and then suggested as a benchmark by the Fast Track Initiative (FTI).

The attainment of the EFA goals, MDGs, and IADGs will depend on how much resources are allocated to education not only to

cover cost of quantifiable inputs i.e school infrastructure, teachers salaries but qualitative inputs as well to cater for the professional development and welfare of teachers, pre-service, in-service training and retraining of teachers, adequate supply of school texts among others

If we all do not agree on the definition of what is quality there is general consensus as to what are the factors that positively impact it. This includes but is not limited to the quality of teachers, the provision of adequate instructional materials, relevant curriculum and in many countries the use of the national languages as the medium of instruction. In specific terms, quality education encompasses the following key elements to which all to ensure that graduates of the school system do not become liabilities to their parents and communities but are able to contribute to development and growth:

- a) Effective teaching (well trained teachers who are paid adequately, and who use methods that focus on the learners' needs;
- b) Well-equipped and learning centers (books, other materials and equipment available to stimulate learners);
- c) Safe schools (places where all learners, especially girls, are safe from danger and harassment;
- d) Enough instructions in the right languages (an adequate number of hours each week and each year, beginning in the learners' own language and introducing other languages they need gradually overtime
- e) Relevant and useful curriculum (learning based on local, national and international constituents and focused on broader knowledge and competencies which they can apply in their lives) and
- f) Functional school management(run by local boards and communities where parents and community leaders can

make sure the school serves their children well and is endowed with . the resources it needs.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

La qualité a un cout mais elle n'a pas de prix. Les Gouvenements africains doivent mettre tout en œuvre pour la garantir dans nos écoles et diligenter la réalisation des objectifs de l'EPT est l'OMD pour tous les enfants, les jeunes et les adultes africains d'ici 2015.

Je vous remercie de votre attention