

Statement by Finland
ECOSOC High Level Segment

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First of all let me align myself with the statement of the European Union.

The theme of this discussion could not be more pertinent. Close to 20% of our ODA is channeled through the EU. The EC is a very significant implementing actor in education in the developing world. During the last few years, 6-8% of our ODA has been allocated to education. Our new government has two weeks ago reconfirmed our commitment, and emphasized the role of education in our development cooperation also in the future.

Both reports by the Secretary General – the first on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education, the second on current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education, describe well the present situation: challenges faced and policy responses, best practices and action needed.

There is enough analysis. It is comprehensive, and there is much consensus on what should be done. Only determined action is falling short.

I would like to pick up on a couple of issues, and underline their critical importance, on the basis of our own experience:

- inclusiveness and accessibility.
- employability, employment led education, school-work transition
- teachers' training, working conditions.....

I am happy that these things are emphasized in the reports. Our experience, excellent results achieved in international student performance assessment seem to fully confirm/demonstrate their great importance as we have attached much importance at them and continue to do so.

My main point, however, is aid effectiveness and better delivery of aid. I would like to underline their importance. There are at present a lot of donor efforts underway in the field of education. Unfortunately, there is also much duplication, and waste of financial and other resources, as donor coordination is weak or non-existent, or donor efforts are not properly integrated in national education strategies.

Consequently, strong aid harmonization and donor coordination are necessary for better outcomes. I underline: all-inclusive – as much as possible, and using partner country strategies, once they are in place, and strengthened if needed.

Often sectoral budget support could be the solution. We should draw in donor coordination not only the UN agencies but development banks, public-private partnerships, bilateral donors, emerging donors, too.

We are confident that donor cooperation can add significantly to aid effectiveness. In our view, this is the single most important area where already in the short term there is much potential to do better.

This is the angle from which we all should view our efforts in education, particularly this year when we are heading for Busan, to assess our track record in terms of aid effectiveness, to which both partners' and donors' strong contribution is necessary. This is an issue where ECOSOC should show leadership – otherwise it will get marginalized.

