



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

PIFS(06).FEDMN.03

EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

*Nadi, Fiji
26-27 September 2006*

ALL SESSIONS BACKGROUND PAPER

**FORUM BASIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN 2001, INCLUDING 2002, 2004
AND 2005 REVIEWS**

The attached paper, prepared by the Forum Secretariat, provides background to, and a copy of, the *Forum Basic Education Action Plan* as formulated by Forum Education Ministers at their meeting in 2001. The 2002, 2004 and 2005 reviews of the Plan are also attached. This paper is provided for reference purposes.



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

PIFS(06)FEDMN.03

EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

*Nadi, Fiji
26-27 September 2006*

Summary brief

FORUM BASIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN

Purpose

This paper provides the background to, and a copy of, the *Forum Basic Education Action Plan*, a copy of which is attached for reference purposes. The review of the Plan undertaken in 2002, 2004 and 2005 is also attached.

Background

2. The first meeting of Forum Education Ministers was held on 14 - 15 May 2001 in Auckland, New Zealand.
3. This meeting was convened by Forum on the advice of the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM), which had considered evidence that basic education systems were failing the greater bulk of young people in the region and leaving them ill-equipped for dealing with their futures in either formal or informal labour markets.
4. Ministers recognised that basic education is the fundamental building block for society and that if this foundation is weak then livelihoods will be more difficult to pursue, and that a basic education can impact on social cohesion and personal security. Ministers agreed to a vision statement and goal, and to a number of national and regional actions, as well as the closer cooperation with civil society in education, under a *Forum Basic Education Action Plan 2001* (copy attached).
5. The *Plan* encompasses a Pacific Vision for Education, ways for turning the region's priority for basic education into effective action ("Where to Now?"), the "Delivery and Resourcing of Basic Education", "Developing Partnerships" with non-government providers, and issues related to gender and governance.
6. The outcomes of this first Forum Education Ministers Meeting were tabled at the Forum in August 2001, at which Leaders agreed that:
 10. *The Forum recognised that basic education is the fundamental building block for all societies. When combined with greater employment opportunities, basic education leads to enhanced personal and societal security.*
 11. *Leaders therefore endorsed the outcomes of the Forum Education Ministers Meeting held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 14-15 May 2001, and strongly*

FORUM EYES ONLY

supported the Forum Basic Education Action Plan 2001. In particular, the Forum welcomed the Pacific Vision for Education which outlines measures for translating the region's priority on basic education into effective action through a set of regional initiatives. In addition they agreed to further work on the provision of necessary resources for basic education, the development of partnerships with non-governmental providers, as well as the incorporation of gender and governance issues in basic education.

12. Leaders also recognised the important role of information technology in the delivery of education and further called on members to urgently implement measures to address the high cost of accessing information technology infrastructure.

7. The following year, meeting in Suva in December 2002, Education Ministers discussed further issues relating to the Forum Basic Education Action Plan, and their recommendations formed the 2002 Review of the Plan. This is attached to this paper.

8. Ministers of Education of the Pacific Islands Forum met again in Apia, Samoa, on 28 and 29 January 2004, alongside the UNESCO Education Ministers meeting, to consider issues related to implementation and enhancement of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan 2001.

9. Ministers reviewed the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and noted the steps taken for its implementation. In particular, they noted progress made with the Human Resource Development Programme, through the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Development of (basic) Education (PRIDE) funded by the European Union under its 9th EDF and by NZAID. The Ministers recommendations formed the 2004 Review of the Plan. This is also attached to this paper.

10. In the review of the FBEAP in January 2004, the Ministers of Education agreed to initiate a biennial stocktake of progress in the implementation of the FBEAP at the national and regional level. The implementation and progress of PRIDE also forms a fundamental component of the FBEAP stocktake exercise

Issues

11. The implementation of key initiatives the Forum Basic Education Action Plan undertaken in 2005 - 2006 is reviewed in paper PIFS(06)FEDMN.04 (under Agenda Item 2)

Forum Secretariat, Suva
25 August 2006

FORUM EYES ONLY



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

FORUM BASIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN - 2001

Auckland, New Zealand
15 May 2001

Preamble

Ministers of Education of the Pacific Islands Forum met in Auckland on the 14th and 15th of May 2001, as directed by Forum Leaders in Palau in November 1999, to consider issues related to human resource development in the Forum region.

2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Young Vivian, Minister of Education for Niue. Ministers from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga attended the meeting, with Australia, Nauru, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu also represented. Observers from the ADB, DFID (UK), UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, SPC, SPREP and the USP were present.

3. Ministers deliberated on issues concerning the delivery of basic education to the peoples of the Pacific. Education Ministers noted that Leaders, in calling for this meeting, had asked them to consider the work of the Forum Economic Ministers in the area of human resources development, whose deliberations are set out in Annex 1.

Pacific Vision for Education

4. Ministers recognised that basic education is the fundamental building block for society. If this foundation is weak, then livelihoods are more difficult to pursue or students struggle in the higher reaches of education. Furthermore, through the teaching of health, culture, governance and other subjects basic education can engender the broader life skills that lead to social cohesion and which, when combined with an enhancing of employment opportunities, creates a higher level of personal and societal security.

5. As a first step Ministers agreed on the following as the vision and goals for Forum members:

Vision

Basic education as the fundamental building block for society should engender the broader life skills that lead to social cohesion and provide the foundations for vocational callings, higher education and life long learning. These when combined with enhanced employment opportunities create a higher level of personal and societal security and development.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Forum members recognised that development of basic education takes place in the context of commitments to the world community and meeting the new demands of the global economy, which should be balanced with the enhancement of their own distinctive Pacific values, morals, social, political, economic and cultural heritages, and reflect the Pacific's unique geographical context.

Goal

To achieve universal and equitable educational participation and achievement.
To ensure access and equity and improve quality and outcomes.

6. In adopting this Vision Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the Dakar 2000 Education for All Framework for Action goals and noted the actions being taken at the national level for the development of strategic plans. These goals are:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls and children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence for all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

7. In addition Ministers committed themselves to the following specific strategies:

- The promotion of different forms of secondary and vocational education.
- To review the curricula of training centres and non-formal education programmes to match skills taught (outcomes) with the requirements for employment and livelihood in the traditional subsistence economy.
- Develop non-formal education and work-based programmes in cooperation with civil society and the private sector.
- Promote the role of civil society in providing non-formal skills training.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Where to Now?

8. Ministers noted that while basic education has been a priority in the region, this has not been turned fully into effective action. While recognising that some countries have made progress, and that the severity of problems with basic education varies significantly between countries, it appears that significant gains could be made through Forum members sharing their experiences - both successes and failures - in basic education. Ministers also noted the potential for sharing resources - particularly for inputs into basic education system - across the region.

National and Regional Development Context

9. Ministers recognised that basic education has, by its nature, very broad and strong impacts on the potential for private sector development and for the success of students pursuing higher education. But it should also be acknowledged that it is a very intensive user of manpower and financial resources. The goals set for basic education and the strategies to be followed therefore need to be well integrated with national planning policies and planning frameworks.

10. Ministers therefore agreed that there is an urgent need for each country, in line with national development goals and commitments, to improve basic educational planning, through clearly identifying desired basic educational outcomes and the learning needs of individuals and groups in that society. To this end it was further agreed that:

- (a) national planning for universal and equitable educational participation must take into account:
 - (i) the cultural, moral social, political and economic contexts of education;
 - (ii) the inter-relationships of the various levels of educational provisions and institutions.
- (b) in order to develop sound policy and planning frameworks it is essential to improve:
 - (i) data and information collection and retrieval systems to provide accurate, timely, and relevant data for informed policy decisions;
 - (ii) the capacity of national systems to develop coherent national educational plans through high level training of key personnel and strengthening of the human and material resources of planning units.
- (c) that Ministers of Education consider the setting up of a regional qualifications framework, covering basic, primary, secondary, TVET and tertiary education, benchmarked against appropriate international standards and qualifications.

Delivery and Resourcing of Basic Education

11. Ministers acknowledged that there are weaknesses in education systems as indicated by drop-out and repeater figures and in terms of basic literacy and numeracy achievements. The school curricula, despite attempts at redirecting these to vocational needs, remain largely academic and do not fully meet needs of all Pacific students. The identified weaknesses in education systems can be summarised as:

FORUM EYES ONLY

- alienation and poor performance of students, the result of:
 - the quality and number (relative to student numbers) of teachers;
 - the relevance and lack of Pacific foundation of the curriculum; and
 - poor or unresponsive departmental and school managements;
- poor resourcing of basic education, which could be overcome through:
 - re-prioritise education and national government spending;
 - improving the effectiveness of education spending; and
 - developing partnerships with CSO, NGOs and the private sector.

12. Ministers identified an urgent need to address the provision of education to deliver better quality development and education outcomes, which has implications for the whole process of education, and requires policy, planning, and resources to achieve improvements in:

- the competence and confidence of teachers with relevant skills and knowledge;
- curriculum programmes;
- the quality and relevance of teaching materials;
- teaching methods and learning styles;
- school management and culture;
- the relationships with communities and stakeholders;
- the quality of school buildings;
- assessment procedures, which should be valid and reliable;
- the participation of all stakeholders in the planning and delivery of education.

Improving Quality in Basic Education

13. In reviewing the elements affecting the quality of education, Ministers further agreed on the following measures:

- (a) Early Childhood Education (ECE)

That while continuing with collaborative efforts with NGOs, church and community organisations in providing ECE to pre-school age children, governments should address resource requirements for ECE teacher training and assess how ECE teachers can obtain appropriate status and conditions of employment.
- (b) Pre-Service Teacher Education
 - (i) That upgrading of pre-service training programmes, staffing and resources at the training institutions that is either in process or is being anticipated in most training institutions, be fully addressed as a matter of priority.
 - (ii) That induction for beginning teachers is formalised involving teacher training institutions, CDUs, field staff and schools.
 - (iii) That small island states that do not have their own training institutions consider establishing teachers' centres to be used for complementary training of local trainees who are undertaking USP and other institutions' extension courses in Education as a route to a teacher qualification. A substantive position of a coordinator of the teachers' centre be established and filled by a qualified teacher

FORUM EYES ONLY

educator who would also supervise school-based training of trainees.

- (c) In-Service Teacher Education
 - (i) That existing data bases be further utilised to generate teacher supply projections where necessary and plans be implemented to train all untrained teachers as soon as practicable.
 - (ii) That upgrading programmes be considered for serving teachers who are found to be partially trained as assessed against the level of pre-service training currently being offered in most FIC primary training institutions.
 - (iii) That intensive in-service courses targeting specific needs of teachers such as proficiency in English and skills in multi-class teaching be mounted in countries where teachers need such courses.
- (d) Classroom Teaching

In accordance with the local database on the conditions that exist in schools in terms of the quality of classrooms and physical facilities, attention be paid to upgrading those classrooms which are currently impoverished and provide a sub-standard educational environment for teaching and learning.
- (e) Community Support

That the current initiatives in promoting the active involvement of the school community in the affairs of the school be strengthened in order to enhance the quality of facilities and teaching-learning resources.
- (f) Towards Enhancing Professionalism in Teaching

That enhancing professionalism in teaching, whereby the profession is guided by the ethos, standards and ethics of the profession itself, be promoted as a long-term goal for enhancing teachers' capacity for managing changes and their identity as teachers.

14. Ministers acknowledged the value of using the indigenous language as the language of instruction in the early years of education.

15. Ministers noted that the development of information technology had greatly advanced the infrastructure available for the delivery of all education services, including in-service training of teachers, and urged that institutions involved in education services make greater use of this technology. However, Ministers noted that the cost of accessing this infrastructure is a serious impediment to widening its use and requested that their governments urgently implement the measures recommended by Forum Economic Ministers and Communication Ministers to address this issue.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

16. Ministers noted that a high proportion of students in the education system do not, or are unable to, aspire to carrying on their education through to formal tertiary education, and that the needs of these students were not yet adequately catered for. Having noted the Report of the Technical/Vocational Taskforce on Education and Training in the Pacific Region, Ministers agreed:

FORUM EYES ONLY

- (a) that, in accordance with existing national provisions for TVET, governments should endeavour to raise the status of TVET in national education policies;
- (b) that governments should endeavour to include TVET as a priority in their national plans;
- (c) that any work on financing of education include studies on how best to finance TVET, including through partnerships with the private sector, and associated requirements for the setting of a qualifications system; and;
- (d) that UNESCO be invited to organise a Pacific Conference on the delivery of TVET skills development programmes and the provision of new programmes, with special consideration of standards and comparability of qualifications within and between Pacific countries.

Financing Education

17. The key issue in improving the quality of basic education is its financing, an area that needs significantly more work. Ministers noted that governments have come under increasing community pressure to allocate greater public resource to improving the overall quality of basic education, and to bridge the yawning gaps between rural and urban education resources and outcomes.

18. Ministers acknowledged that with communities having to take on the bulk of the financial responsibility for preschools, this significantly disadvantages children from poorer families, despite evidence that "preschoolers" subsequently perform better academically, relative to those who did not attend pre-school. In this context Ministers also acknowledged that the current financing of education in the Pacific tends to emphasis secondary and post-secondary education at the expense of basic education.

19. These issues remain to be addressed and there is an urgent need for strong empirical research to identify the factors that are leading to good academic outcomes, and to reallocate financial resources to boost the efficiency and productivity of these factors throughout the education system. In this context the Ministers directed that the Forum Secretariat work with multilateral development institutions and other development partners to:

- (a) provide a synthesis of existing studies of financing education and analysis of other financing situations.
- (b) further examine issues in regard to recurrent cost funding, including consideration of the concept that at least 10% of education budgets should be devoted to non-salary expenses such as books and in-service training and mechanisms through which to achieve this.
- (c) analyse the implications of current and future funding capabilities and needs in education and exploring effective option for achieving effective delivery of and improved outcomes from education in the Pacific.

FORUM EYES ONLY

20. Ministers noted that a number of problems faced by Forum Island countries could be addressed through:

- (a) improved co-ordination among donors, and between donors and stakeholders, including Forum island governments; and
- (b) finding ways to better merge and share work on the development of basic education within developed countries.

21. Ministers welcomed the focus on human resource development in the regional strategy being developed for Economic Development Funding (EDF) under the Cotonou Agreement. For programmes at the regional level Ministers requested that the Pacific ACP National Authorising Officers and the Regional Authorising Officer take into account this Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

Developing Partnerships

22. Ministers recognised that although governments will continue as the major funder of basic education in order to protect access and equity, government funding alone will be insufficient to provide basic education for all. Greater participation by non-government partners can increase the level of resources available, and increase the relevance and effectiveness of the learning process.

23. Recognising that non-formal education (NFE) is an important strategy for development, Ministers agreed to address immediate NFE needs, including budgetary needs, by undertaking the following actions:

- (a) provide effective communications linkages between NFE, micro-enterprise and micro-financing initiatives.
- (b) establish a focal point (within the appropriate Ministry or department within a ministry) which has close partnerships with NFE providers.
- (c) provide an enabling environment by actively coordinating NFE initiatives.
- (d) develop clear and robust national policy on NFE.
- (e) support training at national and regional levels for NFE key personnel.
- (f) ensure effective evaluation and monitoring of NFE programmes.

24. In recognition of the partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector already in place in all Forum Island Countries in the provision and delivery of basic education, and to enhance the achievement of national, regional and international commitments, Ministers directed the Forum Secretariat, in association with other regional organisations and UN agencies, to document and quantify the contribution of civil society in the provision and delivery of basic education with the view to developing model enabling government/CSO partnership policies.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Other Issues

Gender and Equity Issues

25. Ministers noted that a key issue is equitable participation and achievement, including for both girls and boys, those from rural and urban areas and other who are disadvantaged in current system delivery. The commitments made under the Dakar 2001 Education for All Framework for Action were also noted and to further these Ministers agreed:

- (a) Recognising and building on existing initiatives, and in fulfillment of existing commitments to the Pacific Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Education for All (EFA) and the World Social Summit, to encourage their governments to undertake the following actions:
 - (i) at the national level undertake gender analysis of education access and quality and use the findings to support education policy revision and to ensure allocation of resources in support of gender equal education;
 - (ii) collaborate with Ministers for Finance and Economics to support gender analysis of budget processes in order to highlight ways in which government budgets can more effectively support sustainable and equitable education and HRD;
 - (iii) encourage teacher training institutions to utilise existing regional and national services that are providing gender awareness training and data collection training;
 - (iv) direct vocational and technical training institutions to provide data on enrolment and completion rates for men and women to government on an annual basis and encourage them to develop institutional gender policies in line with existing constitutional mandates and government commitments to gender equality; and
 - (v) review rules and regulations about treatment of students who become pregnant while in school and those with children to ensure they are not discriminated against under existing law.
- (b) Governments should consider other issues of equity, for example, access, socio-economic and variability as between rural and urban areas.
- (c) Direct the Forum Secretariat to undertake the following actions in promoting equitable education policies:
 - (i) work with other regional and international agencies to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators and data categories to monitor equality in education.
 - (ii) devise strategies to include these indicators and categories in existing and new program activities such as household surveys and censuses across the region.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Teaching of Governance and Civics

26. Ministers emphasised the importance of encouraging children – as future adults – to participate fully in their societies, to which end basic education should address human rights, governance, the enhancement of Pacific heritages and participation in the global community. The curriculum should also encompass safety and well-being, including drug use and Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

27. While recognising that concepts of governance can be reinforced in formal basic education through traditional curricula, such as history and social studies, Ministers agreed that ensuring that curricula, teacher training and resources cover the relevant material would be a valuable adjunct to the work already undertaken by civil society. In this regard Ministers agreed that:

- (a) Education for governance needs widespread support to be effective and for the formal sector requires explicit government recognition. In this respect it is suggested that education for governance be incorporated into national educational development plans as a key policy for HRD and that the component activities be catered for and supported in the national education budget.
- (b) National efforts in education for governance be extended to the wider community, through non formal education, and to assist in this:
 - (i) That a first phase of advocacy and awareness programs be undertaken with key stakeholders in education to build partnerships, networking and linkages aimed at promoting basic education for good governance.
 - (ii) That formal and non formal providers of basic education be represented on national curriculum advisory bodies to provide advice on social science and the means for incorporating a governance focus in the content and delivery processes.
- (c) The lack of information on which to build good curricula and resource materials has been noted and suggests:
 - (i) That agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and USP be encouraged to set up web pages containing basic source material on education for governance.
 - (ii) That the Forum Secretariat or the USP establish a collection of printed source material on educating for good governance.
 - (iii) That a training component on case writing be integrated into CSO capacity building programs so as to encourage the documentation of field experiences and practices relating to education for good governance.
 - (iv) That a directory of expertise on basic education for good governance be compiled for purposes of strengthening networks and collaboration.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Conclusions

28. Ministers agreed that education is the foundation for the process of economic and social development, and that a mechanism is required to ensure that the Pacific Vision and Strategies for Basic Education are actively pursued. Consequently Ministers recommend to Leaders that they meet on a regular basis.

29. Ministers requested that the Secretariat be mandated to facilitate the arrangements to bring about the implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

FORUM ECONOMIC MINISTERS

Apia, Samoa

July 1999

Decision on Human Resource Development

26. In our first two meetings, Economic Ministers focused on the urgent need to improve governance, rebalance the public sector and attract investment. Nonetheless, we have recognised that there is a need to ensure that priorities are set such that economic and social development and our other strategic objectives will be effectively targeted. One such universal objective is the development of human resources in support of sustainable economic development. This requires, in turn, a refocusing of formal and informal education activities to better support the private sectors' needs through widening employment opportunities.

27. Accordingly, we have reviewed the current status and situation of both formal and informal education throughout the region and have considered priorities for human resource development that best meet the regions' strategic development objectives. We agree that:

- (i) high priority be given to education in national development planning and budgeting;
- (ii) increased emphasis is required on the foundation of training and education at the level of basic formal education.

28. We also consider that continuing efforts are required to bolster human resource development efforts and to this end direct the Secretariat to identify and to work with Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) and other relevant agencies:

- (i) to undertake further research in the delivery of basic level education in Forum countries and define the scope for involving the private sector (including civil society and non-government organisations) in the delivery of formal and non-formal education;
- (ii) to assist with the development of national human resource development and education strategic planning;

29. We recommend that Leaders consider the convening of an ad hoc meeting of Forum Ministers of Education and that this meeting consider the results of the work that we have directed to be undertaken in the area of human resource development.

FORUM EYES ONLY



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

FORUM BASIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN – 2002 REVIEW

Suva, Fiji

12 December 2002

Preamble

Ministers of Education of the Pacific Islands Forum met in Suva on 11 and 12 December 2002, to consider issues related to implementation and enhancement of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan 2001.

2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, Minister of Education for Fiji. Ministers from Cook Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu attended the meeting, with Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati and Palau also represented. Observers from New Caledonia, the Commonwealth of Learning, UN ESCAP-EPOC, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank, South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the USP were present.

3. Ministers welcomed this opportunity to review implementation of the Forum Basic Education Plan, and to consider the conclusions of a number of papers prepared in the process of its implementation.

Review of Implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan

4. Ministers reviewed the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and noted the steps taken for its implementation and the importance in this respect of the proposed programme for funding under the European Union's 9th EDF Pacific Regional Indicative Programme.

5. In respect of the Human Resource Development Programme for funding under the 9th EDF Ministers agreed that:

- (a) further work to revise and finalise the proposed programme, including optimisation of benefits to, and control by, member countries, be undertaken by the CROP Human Resource Development Working Group, including within this process:
 - (i) an opportunity for member country education officials to comment on the programme design, by the end of January 2003;

FORUM EYES ONLY

- (ii) the CROP HRD Working Group to revise the programme design, taking into account country comments, for submission by the end of February 2003 to education Ministers and officials for their clearance;
 - (iii) the programme design to be finalised for submission to the European Union by the end of March 2003;
- (b) that a sub-committee comprising the Ministers of Education of Fiji (Chair), Samoa, Kiribati and Papua New Guinea review country priorities and then the revised programme design prior to its submission to member countries in February 2003; and
- (c) that UNESCO, UNICEF and PATVET should be more fully involved in the design and implementation of the Programme given their experience and expertise.

Education for All

6. Ministers welcomed the report by UNESCO on progress in implementing Education for All in the Pacific, noting that all Forum island countries had completed their EFA Plans at the end of 2001, and requesting that development partners give greater emphasis to supporting implementation.

Basic Education Finance in Pacific Forum Island Countries

7. Ministers recalled from their first meeting the importance placed on addressing issues concerning the financing of education. They welcomed the paper on this topic and noted the strategies presented for their consideration, especially in the context of external economic pressures on countries and the rationalising of the size of the public sector and political instability, which have reduced some national education budgets.

8. Ministers agreed that they direct their officials to use the paper's `funding framework and guidelines to review finance issues for purposes of annual budgeting and medium term and long term education sector planning. In addition they agreed that:

- (a) development partners be requested to support regional workshops and training to assist with financial reviews
- (b) the Forum Secretariat be directed to use national reviews for further regional assessments and upgrade of the regional review paper on financing education.

Early Childhood Care and Education in Forum Island Countries

9. Ministers recognised that high quality ECCE programmes can benefit countries by promoting intelligence of young children, increasing the efficiency of primary and secondary education, contributing to future productivity and income,

FORUM EYES ONLY

reducing costs of health and other public services, reducing gender inequities and increasing female participation in the labour force.

10. Acknowledging that integrated ECCE programmes may be the single most effective intervention for helping children, families, communities, and nations break the cycle of poverty, Ministers agreed that they will undertake country reviews of national policies on early childhood care and education using the guidelines set out in Annex 1.

Basic Education for Children and Youth With Disabilities

11. Ministers recognised that the education of children and youth with disabilities remains one of the most serious challenges facing Governments in the Pacific region. Noting that education is a basic human right and that all children, including children with disabilities, have a right to education, and that the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons has been extended for another decade (2003-2012), Ministers:

- (a) agreed to address the issue of access to education for children with disabilities, with a view to increasing the number of such children attending school and, within the context of each countries' situation and capacity and finance available, aim for a target of 75% of children with disabilities able to complete a full course of primary school by 2010;
- (b) to assist in, and as part of, addressing this, agreed that national legislation, strategies, policies and plans for education should include specific targeting of those with disabilities, in the ways suggested in the issues paper (paragraph 44);
- (c) directed the Forum Secretariat, in collaboration with other regional organisations though the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific, to initiate and review regional training and curriculum development for the training of Special Needs teachers with the view to making recommendations on strengthening regional teacher training opportunities;
- (d) directed the Forum Secretariat in collaboration with other regional organisations, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Japan and other donors, to explore the possibility of a regional programme to develop capacity that will provide inclusive education for children with disabilities in Pacific countries, the sharing of regional expertise, and provide examples of good practice.

Pacific Association Of Technical and Vocational Training (PATVET)

12. Ministers welcomed the formation of a regional association of service suppliers for technical and vocational training, and agreed:

- (a) to recognise the Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) as having a key contribution to make in reducing poverty in our countries;

FORUM EYES ONLY

- (b) to the establishment of a working committee to set up policy and procedures leading toward regional acceptance of qualifications and academic awards throughout the Pacific region, including Australia and New Zealand; and
- (c) that PATVET be invited to participate in the CROP Human Resources Development Working Group.

Next Meeting

13. Ministers recommend to Forum that it agree that Education Ministers convene their third meeting in May 2004.

Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education

- (a) Clarifying government roles and responsibilities for ECCE programmes
- (b) Undertaking a leading role in the coordination of development partnership assistance in order to create sustainable support and ensure follow-through of development plans.
- (c) Developing national plans of action on ECCE that identify the priorities and specific areas of development to include the following:
 - Appointing a national ECCE Coordinator and Area Advisors to provide advisory services, monitor development of ECCE programmes, and liaise between communities, PSAs, and governments
 - Prioritise curriculum development and implementation in their national education development plans
 - Undertake an analysis of teacher remuneration costs in order to inform governments' future discussions for the financial assistance of teachers' salaries
 - Prioritise the clarification of roles and responsibilities of providing teacher education and training in ECCE policy guidelines
 - Conduct an analysis of trained and untrained teacher needs in order to inform teacher education plans
 - Develop a consistent, ongoing programme of professional education utilising national and/or regional tertiary institutions
 - Initiate the collection of data in order to monitor ECCE programme operations and inform future plans for upgrading of ECCE services.
 - Develop policies on facilities, toilets, safe drinking water and educational material and resources for licensing and monitoring purposes

FORUM EYES ONLY



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

FORUM BASIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN – 2004 REVIEW

Apia, Samoa
29 January 2004

Preamble

Ministers of Education of the Pacific Islands Forum met in Apia, Samoa, on 28 and 29 January 2004, alongside the UNESCO Education Ministers meeting, to consider issues related to implementation and enhancement of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan 2001.

2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Minister of Education for Samoa, with the Honourable Marian Hobbs, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs (ODA) and Education for New Zealand, serving as Vice-Chair. Also in attendance were Ministers from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, together with representatives of Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands. Observers comprised representatives of New Caledonia, Tokelau, UNESCO, the World Bank, the Commonwealth of Learning, the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, the University of the South Pacific and the European Union.

3. Ministers thanked UNESCO for its role in convening and supporting the meeting. They welcomed this opportunity to review the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and to consider the conclusions of a number of papers with a bearing on various facets of its implementation.

Implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

4. Ministers reviewed the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and noted the steps taken for its implementation. In particular, they noted progress made with the Human Resource Development Programme, through the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Development of (basic) Education (PRIDE) funded by the European Union under its 9th EDF and by NZAID. In considering a proposal for a biennial stocktake, Ministers noted that this should not in itself detract from implementation, and that work on qualifications should not disrupt the delivery of education.

5. Ministers agreed to:

- (a) note progress on implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan, especially through the inception of the PRIDE project;

FORUM EYES ONLY

- (b) initiate a biennial stocktake of progress in implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan at the national and regional levels; and
- (c) approve the further development of a register of qualifications, to be managed and coordinated by the Forum Secretariat.

The Role of Assessment in Improving Quality in Education

6. Ministers noted that standards based assessment founded on defined learning outcomes needs to be introduced at the school level as well as nationally and that each country should develop an assessment framework, in line with its curriculum framework. Such a strategy should emphasise the role of assessment as one of enhancing teaching and learning.

7. Ministers agreed to consider developing national assessment frameworks in line with the national curriculum frameworks.

Review of Pre-University Courses in the Pacific

8. Ministers recalled previous discussion on the issue of pre-university courses at the December 2003 USP Council Meeting and the 2003 SPBEA annual meeting. They noted, further, that the USP Foundation courses were subject to a review, the outcomes of which were to be reported to the May 2004 meeting of the USP Council, and that the USP had accepted the South Pacific 7th Form Certificate, subject to setting specific course requirements.

Language and Cultures in the Pacific Region: Issues, Practices and Alternatives

9. Ministers recalled from their first meeting the importance placed on addressing issues concerning language and culture in the Pacific region. They:

- (a) noted the contents of and suggestions in the paper provided by the USP concerning the inclusion of indigenous language and culture in Pacific education;
- (b) agreed to consider adopting national language policies as part of the education planning process; and
- (c) requested PRIDE to hold a follow-up regional meeting on language policy and practice for senior education officials.

Case study on ICT: People Friendly Network in Solomon Islands

10. Ministers heard of the People First Network, an innovative approach to connectivity for remote, rural and underprivileged communities in Solomon Islands and how it has been applied to deliver education to remote island communities. They noted the utility of the technology and the immediate benefits to students and facilitators. Ministers called on their governments to more actively implement the Pacific Regional ICT Policy and Plan.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Other Issues

11. The World Bank announced that it will be funding and running research for a review of human development in health, education, and social protection. There will be formal presentations at ministerial meetings and workshops to discuss outcomes.

Next Meeting

12. Ministers agreed to reactivate the sub-committee established in Suva in 2002, with the inclusion of FSM, to monitor regional activities, including PRIDE, on their behalf.

13. Ministers recommend to Forum that it agree that Education Ministers convene their fourth meeting in May 2005.

PIFS

Apia, Samoa

29 January 2004

FORUM EYES ONLY



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

FORUM BASIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN – 2005 REVIEW

Apia, Samoa
23-24 May 2005

Preamble

Ministers of Education of the Pacific Islands Forum met at the University of the South Pacific's Alafua Campus, Apia, Samoa, on 23 and 24 May 2005, to consider issues related to implementation and enhancement of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan 2001.

2. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Teima Onorio, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports and Vice President of Kiribati, with the Honourable Michael Laimo, Minister of Education for Papua New Guinea serving as Vice-Chair. Also in attendance were the Prime Minister from the Cook Islands, and Ministers from Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, together with representatives of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tonga. Observers comprised representatives of New Caledonia, Tokelau, the Commonwealth of Learning, the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment, the University of the South Pacific, the National University of Samoa, the Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the European Union and JICA.

Opening

3. The Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Mr Iosefa Maiava, welcomed participants to the meeting, noting that it was the fourth meeting of Forum education ministers and that there was good progress to report on regarding implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

4. The Minister of Education for Samoa, Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, welcomed participants to the meeting on behalf of the Government of Samoa. She noted that progress has been made since the first Ministerial meeting and requested that all countries take ownership of PRIDE.

Keynote address

5. Sir John Daniel, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), presented the keynote address. Sir John acknowledged the positive input of Pacific membership of the board of COL, in particular the Honourable Fiamē Mata'afa. He noted that development equated with people expanding the freedoms that people enjoy and that technology can potentially contribute greatly to this process. He advanced the notion of 'TVET for All', which

FORUM EYES ONLY

could particularly benefit those who have not had the advantage of completing an education. Sir John outlined the work of COL in the Pacific as well as new initiatives such as the Virtual University for Small States and work in health and literacy and livelihoods. He further noted that PATVET is a powerful network to encourage networking and sharing of resources.

Review of the Implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan

6. Ministers reviewed the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) and noted the steps taken for its implementation at both national and regional levels. It was noted that most elements of the FBEAP are contained in national education systems although there is substantial variation in access to information communication technology throughout the region. Areas where member governments could increase their involvement include early childhood education and education for children with special needs.

7. At the regional level, it was noted that while the main vehicle for implementing the FBEAP is the PRIDE project, initiatives have been taken in several other areas including disability and special education; TVET, language policy and the regional qualifications register.

8. Ministers agreed to:

- a. Note the progress on the implementation of the FBEAP nationally and regionally, especially the PRIDE Project;
- b. Note the results of stocktake report on the implementation of the FBEAP at a national level;
- c. Note the capacity of the FBEAP to act as a powerful vehicle for inspiring collaborative efforts to identify, document and apply innovative Pacific responses to the challenge of ensuring that basic education serves as a critical element in building equity in education for development;
- d. Agree that the FBEAP be highlighted in all relevant discussions on social issues undertaken around the region;
- e. Further endorse the current initiatives underway to develop teacher education courses in Special Needs Education at the University of the South Pacific.

Review of the Implementation of the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project

9. Ministers reviewed the progress on PRIDE, noting its substantial achievements since the last Education Ministers' meeting.

10. Ministers reiterated that the FBEAP was the principal policy in education for the region and that PRIDE was the major vehicle for implementing this policy.

11. Ministers noted with concern the slow progress in the development and submission of sub-projects and especially of the release of national sub-project funds and acknowledged that countries will need to be more proactive in the submission of national sub-projects for funding assistance.

FORUM EYES ONLY

12. Ministers agreed to:
 - a. Note the progress of PRIDE;
 - b. Endorse the benchmarks for education strategic plans;
 - c. Note that support for TVET could be provided through PRIDE.

The Pacific Plan

13. Ministers heard a presentation on the draft Pacific Plan that is currently under development, noting in particular how education relates to the overall economic and social development of the individual country and the region.

14. Ministers noted that the education sector is ahead of the Pacific Plan with regards to sectoral policy and planning as is highlighted by the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

15. Ministers expressed the view that education should be given greater prominence in the Pacific Plan and should not just be seen as a prerequisite to achieving other areas of the Plan. It was recommended that the FBEAP become an integral part of the Pacific Plan. It was noted that education is increasingly seen as a tradable commodity, which is regretted.

Implementing TVET

16. Ministers noted the TVET activities currently underway in Fiji and the Solomon Islands, in particular the development of TVET policy in the Solomon Islands.

The Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET)

17. In 2002, the Ministers welcomed the formation of PATVET and agreed to recognise PATVET as having a key contribution to make in reducing poverty in our countries.

18. PATVET reported to Ministers in 2004 and again in 2005, proposing recommendations that emanated from a regional workshop in TVET.

19. Ministers agreed to:
 - a. Note the progress achieved in moving the TVET agenda forward at both the national and regional level in the Pacific to date;
 - b. Acknowledge the lead role by PATVET in moving the TVET agenda forward;
 - c. Acknowledge the commitment by a large number of national, regional and international partners to work with PATVET to achieve the goals set by the Education Ministers in the FBEAP in relation to TVET;
 - d. Note that while there has been some progress in TVET in some countries since the launch of the FBEAP 2001, it is recognised that additional financial resources for TVET are still needed;

FORUM EYES ONLY

- e. Champion the role, status and development of TVET at the national level in Pacific Island countries and help mobilise resources to enhance the wider understanding and acceptance of TVET in the region;
- f. Endorse the planned development of a regional Inventory of TVET institutions in the Pacific in 2005;
- g. Endorse the planned development of the regional Qualifications Register after the completion of the Inventory of TVET institutions, and subsequently the regional Qualifications Framework;
- h. Strongly urging the SPC to accommodate the request to host the PATVET Secretariat;
- i. Confirm the importance of TVET in the context of the FBEAP and agreed to encourage greater support for TVET through regional programmes including PRIDE, SPC, and the Forum Secretariat among others.

Entrepreneurship Education

20. The Forum Basic Education Action Plan refers to the need to enhance employment opportunities and entrepreneurial education is seen as a part of this process. Ministers heard that entrepreneurial education has the potential to enhance job creation, thus alleviating the region-wide problem of youth unemployment.

21. Ministers noted the need for integration of entrepreneurship education into the overall education curriculum.

22. Ministers:

- a. Agreed that at the regional level:
 - o Further research be undertaken in order to progress the introduction of EE into schools in FICs;
 - o The Forum Secretariat seek and develop a regional resource base for EE that can provide technical assistance to Members particularly through ILO, PRIDE and COL, among others. This could include information sharing mechanisms such as a website as well as training for teachers.
- b. Noted that at the national level, countries could:
 - o Develop policy, curriculum and related teaching materials on the basis of locally conducted research, with regional assistance where required;
 - o Develop meaningful partnerships between Ministries of Education and the private sector;
 - o Seek assistance from other regional and international agencies in developing and strengthening EE;
 - o Conduct further research by local researchers in order to progress the introduction of EE into schools.

UNESCO Skills Development Project

23. Ministers heard a presentation on the regional project that encourages unemployed young people to develop indigenous skills to earn livelihoods.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Pre-University Courses

24. Ministers expressed concern that the USP had not accepted several students who had passed the South Pacific Form Seven Examination, whereas those who had sat the USP's Foundation course appeared to gain easier access to the university. There is frustration over this issue as it has been ongoing for some time and has not been resolved.

25. Ministers recommended that the Forum Secretariat commission an independent body to conduct an independent benchmarking exercise to resolve the issue of the relative standard of both examinations and their grading systems.

Pacific Protocol for Teacher Recruitment

26. The issue of a possible protocol for teacher recruitment was raised as smaller FICs will continue to need to recruit teachers from within the region. It was noted that the Commonwealth has recently developed such a protocol. A Pacific protocol could be based on this, but should be more relevant to the needs of the region. Such a protocol would provide some measure of protection for teachers who are recruited within the region. While many teachers are recruited under bilateral arrangements, such a protocol could provide a check-list of areas to be covered.

27. Ministers requested the Forum Secretariat to prepare a draft protocol for the next Forum Education Ministers meeting.

Other Issues

28. UNESCO briefed Ministers on the International Decade on Education for Sustainable Development.

29. UNICEF briefed Ministers on its Life Skills Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools.

30. The Forum Secretariat, on behalf of the Asian Development Bank, briefed Ministers on the ADB's proposed regional study on skills development. Ministers:

- a. Endorsed the proposed ADB regional study on skills development;
- b. Agreed that any projects arising out of the study be supported in the form of grants from the ADB and other development partners.

Next Meeting

31. Ministers agreed that Education Ministers convene their fifth meeting in October 2006.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Apia, Samoa
24 May 2005