



AFRICAN UNION EDUCATION PARTNERS MEETING

COMEDAFVI

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Education in Eastern and Southern Africa: *Basic Education and Gender Equality*

- **Much progresses made in education:** the number of children in primary school have dramatically risen and consequently the number of out-of-school children has declined: from 17.6 million in 2000 to 9 million in 2010.
- However, there are still many children who are **out of school**, with 9 million of primary school age were out-of-school in 2010, indicating the region's countries are unlikely to achieve MDG 2 Universal Primary Education¹. *Reaching children who are not in school and who are at risk of drop out should be a priority on the governments' development agenda.*
- **Girls' education and gender equality.** Poverty, poor access to school, lack of sanitary facilities, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and other forms of gender-based violence, have been depriving girls of their right to education in many countries, while in others, boys are more disadvantaged. *More attention needs to be paid to achieve MDG 3 gender equality by improving access and quality for both girls and boys.*
- **Early Childhood Development (ECD)** programmes can not only improve young children's capacity to develop and learn, but also break down the inter-generational cycle that prevents children from achieving their full potential. Pre-primary school enrollment is still low as 21 per cent in the region. More and more governments are now developing ECD guidelines and policies. *Efforts to provide ECD support to all young children need to be accelerated, bringing many partners.*
- **Quality of education remains a problem, evident in poor learning outcomes.** According to Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), after completing six years of schooling, only 62% of children attain minimum reading scores and only 33% achieve minimum standards in mathematics². *More attention and investment need to be made to enhance students' learning outcomes.*

¹ Some more data from UNICEF 2013 SOWC

- primary school net enrollment rates: 85 per cent for girls and 88 for boys
- survival rate to last primary grade: 49 per cent.
- secondary school net enrollment rates: 30 per cent for girls and 33 per cent for boys.

² In countries that participated in Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, Project III: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia,

- **Education in Emergencies.** Cyclones, earthquakes, floods, conflicts and other emergencies wreak havoc on society and deeply affect children. Fulfilling the right to education is most at risk during such times and during the transition period following a crisis. Education is not only a basic human right, but a tool for recovery. Education can also act as a catalyst for building peace, encouraging parties that once opposed each other to work together for the sake of their children. *Preparedness and response need to be embedded in the education systems, and education should be understood as a priority on the government agenda.*