



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



CENTRAL ASIAN EDUCATION FORUM

**MID DECADE ASSESSMENT:
TOWARDS ACHIEVING EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS**

Report



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

Introduction

Opening of the Six Central Asian Education Forum

EFA - A Collective Commitment

CA Education Forum Review: 2001-2006

MDA: Progress Towards the EFA Goals

Closing of the Forum. Resolution of the Sixth Central Asian Education Forum

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Agenda of the Sixth Central Asian Education Forum

Appendix 2:

List of Participants of the Sixth Central Asian Education Forum

Appendix 3:

CA Education Forum 2002-2007: Brief Chronology

Appendix 4: Key presentations

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PO	Preschool organizations
PE	Preschool education
EU	European Union
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ExCom	Executive Committee
KNU	Kyrgyz National University
MoES KR	Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic
MoES RK	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan
ME RT	Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan
ILO	International Labor Organization
NCRPE	National Center for Research, Practice and Education
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFE	Non-formal Education
NCEQE	National Centre for Education Quality Assurance
EFA	Education for All
UN	United Nations Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
RISTTI	Republican In-Service Teacher Training Institute
RK	Republic of Kazakhstan
RCRP	Republican Center for Research and Practice
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA MDA	Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment
TWG	Thematic Working Group
CA	Central Asia
CARK	Central Asia and the Republic of Kazakhstan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme of International Student Assessment
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

INTRODUCTION

The Central Asian and the Republic of Kazakhstan Education Forum was established in 2002, as a mechanism for implementing education system reforms and launching partnerships and cooperation between the countries attaining to the tasks set by the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000. Commitments to fulfill the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child in the context of the right of children to quality education were also a key component.

Participants of the Dakar Forum, that is, representatives from 155 countries including Central Asian countries, adopted a collective commitment towards attaining the six EFA goals by 2015:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs;
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. 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;
6. Improving every aspects of the quality of education and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The Dakar Framework for Action is intended to have a follow up at the national level to: (a) coordinate all EFA partners, (b) mobilize resources of member countries and partner organizations and (c) monitor and evaluate the achievement of EFA goals.

The United Nations Convention¹ on the Rights of a Child obliges participating countries to promote "...education aiming at: (a) development of a child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities on the whole, (b) development of respect for the child's parents, (c) equipping children for responsible life in a free society, in terms of understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality, and friendship among people..."

Between 2002 and 2007, there were six meetings of the Central Asian Forum (see Appendix 3: *Central Asian Forum 2002-2007: Brief Chronology*).

The Sixth Central Asian Education Forum was held on 27th June 2007 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The Forum was attended by Vice-Ministers and representatives of the Ministries

¹ The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child was ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan (11.09.1994), Kyrgyz Republic (6.11.1994), Republic of Tajikistan (25.11.1993), Turkmenistan (19.10.1993), and Republic of Uzbekistan (29.07.1994). The dates are drawn in tune with the dates of accession to the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. See Status of ratifications of the principal international human rights treaties, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as of 14 July 2006, resource accessed on December 18, 2006 <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/docs/status.pdf>

of Education from five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), Mr Sh. Shaeffer UNESCO Asian-Pacific Regional Director for Education; representatives of UNICEF and UNESCO offices in Central Asia, international partner organizations (UNDP, ILO, USAID and others), diplomatic missions, international experts and education specialists across Kazakhstan as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations (see Appendix 2: *List of Participants of the Sixth Central Asian Education Forum*).

This report contains a brief analytical review of the Sixth Central Asian Education Forum's key aspects that focused on two major issues:

- Discussion of Central Asian countries' reports on Mid-Decade Assessment towards achieving the six goals of global initiative "Education for All".
- Discussion of the findings from the CARK Education Forum Review from 2002 to 2006 and identification of further steps towards improving efficiency in Forum cooperation.



OPENING OF THE SIXTH CENTRAL ASIAN FORUM



In the opening speech, **Mr Zhanseit Tuimebayev, Minister of Education and Science of Kazakhstan**, stressed the political and social importance of the Forum for Central Asian countries. As the Minister put it, “The Central Asian Education Forum is a unique opportunity for us to exchange experience and practically assess the status and quality of education in each of our countries in a regional context.”

The ceremony of passing the Forum Flag from the Government of Turkmenistan to the Government of Kazakhstan, represented by **Ms. Marina Hamrayeva, Head of delegation of the Republic of Turkmenistan**, specialist of the Ministry of Education which was followed by a comprehensive presentation on the development of education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan. **Mr. Zhanseit Tuymebayev - the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan** introduced to the participants considerable achievements and progress of the country’s education system. The presentation covered progress in various fields of education starting with financing issues and continuing with construction of schools, dynamic network and enrolment of preschool education growth and the development of the State vocational education program for 2008-2010. The participants were also acquainted with the priorities in scientific research.



In his welcome speech to the Forum participants, **Mr. Sheldon Shaeffer**, Director of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok, stressed that in line

with the EFA goals, it is expected that by 2015 all school-age children will have access to quality education. He noted that focus on our region should not just be on overall enrolment only, in countries of our region this parameter as a rule is quite high - it can be 95% or more. It is also important to focus on children that are not covered by education for any reason and out-of-school children. The presentation stressed the importance of identifying these reasons for non attendance and existence of this phenomenon.

The Head of UNICEF Office in Kazakhstan, **Mr. Alexander Zouev**, in his welcome speech provided brief information on UNICEF's contribution to the preparation of the EFA Mid-Decade report. He noted that over recent years, positive changes were being observed in each of the six EFA goals. One of the significant factors facilitating this includes political support towards the EFA goals by the governments of all CA countries; for example, he referred to the last Annual Address to the People by the President of the RK, where protection of motherhood and childhood was defined as the priority task of the state. Mr. Zouev also stressed that in order to attain the EFA goals, the education sector must actively cooperate with other Ministries and departments.

EFA - A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

II Session "EFA - A Collective Commitment" was chaired by Mrs. Elmira Imanaliyeva, Deputy Minister of Education and Science and Head of the Kyrgyz Delegation. There were two basic presentations given at the session, which reflected the international view on the role of the EFA global initiative as one of the crucial tools for shaping national policy - Mr. Sh. Shaeffer "Global Action Plan (GAP): Improving Support to Countries in Achieving EFA Goals", and the purpose of researches that are based upon the data analysis to improve politics - Mr. Philippe Testot-Ferry "Education For Some More Than Others?" Regional Education Report for Central and Eastern Europe and CIS.



Mr. Sh. Shaeffer, Director of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, in his presentation "Global Action Plan: Improving Support to Countries in Achieving EFA Goals", underlined the importance of the EFA global initiative not only as a platform for reinvigorated efforts to achieve EFA on international level but as well as a tool for planning national politics providing clear division of responsibilities among EFA convenors.

The GAP offers support to countries to develop national capacity and set up more focused strategies to increase effective action at domestic level. The GAP proposes coordinated actions and assistance at country level in six major directions:

- Assisting administration at national level;
- National capacity building in planning and implementation of the education reforms;
- Exchange of information and EFA promotion;
- Funds/resource mobilization for implementing the EFA goals;
- Effective utilization of the available funds;
- Monitoring and evaluation of achieved EFA goals.

It was also stressed that the GAP should be adapted at national level taking into consideration national education strategies based on the principle "one country – one plan" and encourage collective contribution and ownership through coordination of efforts with all interested

organizations (multilateral partner organizations, organizations of civil society, and etc.). In addition, encourage current on-going mechanisms (sector wide approaches) and strengthen coordination amongst external partners (such as the UN country teams and FTI Fast Track Initiative).



A Regional Report on education in CEE/CIS “*Education For Some More Than Others?*” presented by UNICEF Regional Adviser **Mr. Philippe Testot-Ferry** (UNICEF Regional Office for Baltic States and CIS) highlighted basic research findings carried out in 29 countries comprising six regions: Caucasus, Central Asia, the CIS and the Western region, South-East Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Baltic countries.

The report analyzes equal opportunities and disparity in the education system including three aspects: human rights, social status and economic points of view. The report examines the following units that could provide responses to improve education policy:

- Regional context
- Conditions of Education reforms at the moment
- Access and quality
- Learning and status of labor market
- Costs, financing and governance.

The research findings² testifies that the regional context is characterized by contradictory features. In general, there is economic recovery throughout the region but at the same time considerable fiscal difficulties exist in countries with weaker economies. As a result one can see increased average standards of living, growing income inequality and rising unemployment rates. In general there is a decline in absolute poverty but still persisting pockets of poverty in some countries – particularly child poverty. Child labour that prevents children from schooling is being widely spread. Additionally, though, there is an evident tendency of declining population numbers at the age 0-17.

Research Outcomes are:

- 2.4 million (9%) children of primary school age in the region did not attend school in 2004.
- 12 million (22%) children of secondary and upper school age in the region did not attend school in 2004.
- Over 14 million children approaching adult life are not educated or have no high school degree.
- For 3 countries - Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan, there is little possibility to attain MDG-2, but it is possible for 9 other countries (completion of universal primary education by 2015).

² Full version of report was officially presented to the public on 20 September 2007 in Geneva and available from website http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/070920-RegEduStudy-web_en.pdf.

- 2 countries – Tajikistan and Turkey – lack the possibility of achieving MDG 3, and only 1 country has the possibility (the elimination of gender inequality at all levels of education by 2015).
- Research findings on *children out-of-school revealed that family background is increasingly a determinant of inequity to access – mainly at preschool and upper secondary levels*. In some countries ethnicity is also associated with being a disadvantage. As far as children with special needs and those at risk are concerned, the number of children with disabilities in institutions or receiving benefits tripled between 1990 and 2000 – from 500,000 to 1.5 million.

The most important determinants of learning outcomes are public expenditure, the more financing from the government, the better the results. The disparity of achievements in the sphere of internal education is closely connected with socio-economic condition of its people. It is worth noting here that countries in this region do better in PIRLS and TIMSS than in PISA; this is a source of concern. PIRLS and TIMSS assesses the level of learning and PISA assesses competencies (reading skills, numeric skills and natural science knowledge)



The important aspects for analysis are financing and management of education system in the region. Conclusions of this unit stress on implementation mechanisms of the reforms that are planned and being improved in the field of education. In spite, the fact that countries in the region have mostly increased public expenditure in real terms, it still remains that this is insufficient in most countries. The current reforms have been initiated but have not yet sufficiently penetrated the problems of learning process – particularly in poor and rural areas. Out-dated teaching methods, poorly paid and demotivated teachers lead to decreasing quality which results to falling demand for schooling. Another alarming worry is private tutoring which has become more widespread, opening the door to the danger of unethical practices, in addition therefore to low-income families losing out. Decentralization in reality has led to the situation where-by the funding burden has increasingly been passed to local communities and families. That is the detriment of equity.

Based on the research of the report, there were following recommendations

- To re-define the basic package of educational services that a state should provide free to its citizens.

- To improve the regulations of education systems – decentralization, community participation.
- To increase efficiency – using the advantages from demographic growth and making greater use of Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks.
- To introduce other measures: promoting preschool education, child-friendly school principles and child-centred teaching methods...
- Make use of existing frameworks – EFA, MDG and poverty reduction strategies; A Fast Track Initiative, EU accession and affiliation processes in order to engage child friendly reforms.

CENTRAL ASIAN EDUCATION FORUM REVIEW: 2002-2006

III Session “CA Education Forum Review” was chaired by Mrs. Irina Karimova, Vice-Minister of Education, and Head of the Tajikistan Delegation. The findings of the CA Education Forum evaluation review between 2002 and 2006 was presented at the session. The review was initiated at the Executive Committee meeting held in Ashgabat in 2006 to assess the Forum’s for economic necessity, efficiency as well as its sustainability. The Forum participants were introduced to three possible scenarios for the Forum’s future development and followed by these discussions.

Dr. Sonal Zaveri, in her presentation introduced the findings from **the Review of CA Education Forums from 2001 to 2006** (further “Review”) which she had conducted. The Review is based on 1) A study of five forum working documents and relevant materials (2002-2006), 2) On results of the sample survey undertaken by Forum participants, 3) Visits to two countries - Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and 4) Telephone interviews conducted with key participants of the last five Forums.

The review was the first experience of external assessment by the CA Education Forum. The major reasons for making the independent external review, were understanding the Forum as a mechanism for consolidation of Central Asian policy and expertise towards achieving EFA goals (as well as concern over cost efficiency, required for its annual meeting) and understanding its impact on the education development process in countries.



The review noted that the majority of participants agreed that the CA Education Forum is a powerful mechanism, aiming to support education reforms and a unique platform for dialogue and exchange of opinions on a wide range of issues. Moreover, it is an example of a unique partnership between the two UN organizations: UNICEF and UNESCO, with the capacity to involve other international donors and coordinate education-related issues and common countries development priorities. Alongside that, in-depth study of working programs, forum documents, operational procedure of working mechanisms (Secretariat, Executive Committee - ExCom, thematic working groups - TWGs), assessment of partners role (participating countries, UNICEF, UNESCO and others) and analysis of forum decisions according to their incorporation into the national education reforms agenda, have shown that there are a number of issues within the Central Asian Education Forum that need to be improved and changed completely.³

Based on the assessment of the economic viability, efficiency and sustainability of the previous five education forums, three possible future development scenarios were suggested to Forum participants:

1. The merging of three Central Asian forums - education, protection of motherhood and childhood, and Child Protection Forum. It was suggested to carry out the consolidated Forum on a biennial basis. *The major advantage* of such an approach is comprehensive

³ Full text of the report: Sonal Zaveri. Review of CARK education forum 2001-2006 can be found on www.edu.gov.kz

discussion of crucial issues. *The major disadvantage though*, is too extensive and vague agenda, coupled with a huge number of participants.

2. Forums split into alternate technical and political conferences. There are two possible ways of such separation: 1) Alternate sittings (1st year with the technical composition, the next year, the technical and political composition); 2) The expansion of the Forum to incorporate all former Soviet Union countries and conducting alternate meetings and groups to work on the topics for a period of two years. *The major advantage* of dividing the Forum into two formats includes exchange of experience and lessons learnt on special (technical) issues. *The major disadvantage* is the threat of losing its political significance and value.

3. Streamline the Forum. There were five suggestions:

- Conduct the Forum annually or on a biennial basis: to revise the effectiveness of existing working mechanisms (TWGs, ExCom, and Secretariat) and the establishment of working groups at forums to fulfill specific tasks during the period between forums
- Conduct the Forum on a biennial basis but increase the number of technical meetings with the need for one TWG coordinator in the government;
- Prolong the Forum to last for 5 days, including meeting of the ExCom for 2 days (at the beginning or at the end of the Forum). Cancel some ExCom meetings every 6 months. And 3 days for technical related questions.
- Keep the same format of the Forum but strengthen its effectiveness through existing coordination donor meeting to coordinate the work of TWGs, Secretariat and donor organizations.
- Expand membership (by inviting other neighbouring countries).

Major advantages: without TWGs and the Executive Committee, there is less utilization on resources and organization is also simplified. And *Major disadvantage:* the need for complete revising of the existing mechanism will arise.

There were other common recommendations suggested applicable to any of these scenarios:

- a) Clearly denote roles and responsibilities of the ExCom.
- b) Strengthen motivation to participate at the Annual gathering.
- c) Withdraw TWGs or if continued, overhaul their structure and role.
- d) Strengthen the Secretariat at country level.
- e) Review the roles of UNICEF, UNESCO and member countries.

The Forum participants agreed that the Forum during the past six years, has become a unique opportunity for all Central Asian countries to build partnership and develop collaboration on a variety of issues related to reforms in the education system. Recognition of this fact has become a basis for active discussions regarding the Forum's future. The main issues of discussion were organizational and contextual aspects of the previous Forum's work, as well as proposed scenarios.

In particular, much attention was paid to TWGs. It was marked that four TWGs on Life Skills Education led by Kazakhstan, Adult Education led by Kyrgyzstan, Gender Education led by Tajikistan and Information Management led by Uzbekistan did considerable work and the results had importance for all countries. For example, the results of the life skills thematic group allowed countries to open discussions in the new field of competence. As members of the group noted "...when we were just at the beginning of this work, the pedagogical staff lacked a clear and single understanding what life skills were. There were different opinions on this issue. Today the prevailing understanding is that life skills are more than just separate

skills, for example, healthy lifestyle skills. Results of this TWG work have become a part of the process of re-thinking/revising of the notion “education results”. The work of the TWG on gender education has promoted this issue in education policy; traditionally this issue has been regarded in Central Asian countries as unimportant and not a priority issue. The working group led by Uzbekistan, paid much attention to the establishing and strengthening of the Education Management Information System as a basis for ensuring an effective education management system.

At the same time, the Forum participants noted the necessity in introducing changes into the work of the TWGs as well as changing the themes choice for the working groups. The themes should be related to the current country needs. Today, one of the relevant discussion topics in Central Asia within the context of quality education is literacy. Other important issues concern Non-Formal Education (NFE) and adult education – many aspects on these issues are still unresolved.

Forum participants have paid attention to the fact that at the initial stage for countries, it was important to focus on quantity (e.g. enrolment and others) but now it is time to pay more attention to the quality of education, issues like transformation to 12 year schooling, new education financing mechanisms (to shift financing per head), and issues of access to education for children with special needs and for children out-of-school. It was additionally suggested to coordinate and involve international and donor organizations (ADB, WB, USAID) that work in CA, on the same issues within the framework of achieving MDGs.

Issues on development of analytical capacity and conduct of monitoring and evaluation at country level have also been discussed.

During discussions on three possible scenarios the participants agreed on:

- The scenario of merging three existing Central Asian Forums (educational forum, maternity and childhood protection forum, and forum for protection of children’s rights) would not be acceptable, as each Forum has a wide range of issues and problems to be solved, and would lead to formal and indistinct consideration and decision of problems
- No need to have annual meetings – it is sufficient to have biennial meetings. Saved funds could be used for strengthening the work of the TWG and inviting external experts;
- Approve scenario number 2 and follow up on: (a) revision of the forum objectives. (b) expansion of political and technical groups. (c) revise the role and modernize the working groups Forum (d) revise the roles and responsibilities of CA governments, UNESCO and UNICEF and other donor organizations;
- Establish a task force made-up of one representative of each country, representatives from UNESCO, UNICEF and other donor organizations. The task force should develop and present mechanisms for further Forum operations and functions by November 2007.

MDA: PROGRESS TOWARDS THE EFA GOALS

IV Session “MDA: Progress Towards the EFA Goals” was chaired by Mrs. Marina Hamrayeva, Specialist from the Ministry of Education and Head of the Turkmenistan Delegation. During this session, countries submitted their presentations based on the first EFA MDA draft reports, where they reflected (a) the changes in education policy in the context of achieving six EFA goals (b) existing risks and problems towards attaining EFA goals and (c) planned actions in the midterm perspective.

Changes in the education policy and progress towards achieving EFA goals

Within the Mid Decade Assessment period (2000-2005), there were considerable changes in the education sector reforms in all Central Asian countries. This period was characterized by some stabilization and economic growth. These tendencies were conversely evident in different countries in terms of scale and speed. For example in Kazakhstan, high economic growth allowed the chance to reduce international loans, especially in the education sector. In Tajikistan it was a post-conflict period and only now the country could start paying deep attention to the solution of social-economic issues and problems, including education.

The general overview of education policy presented by country reports in that period, has revealed that in the end of the '90s and at the beginning of 2000s, all countries were in the process of revising their education content and legislative system that would allow the introduction of some changes within the education sector. In all countries the allocation of state budget towards education increased in comparison with the year 2001; in 2005 in Kazakhstan, it constituted 3.5% of GDP (in 2001 – 3,1%), in Kyrgyzstan 4.69% (in 2001 – 3,9%), in Tajikistan 3.45% (in 2001 2,38%), in Uzbekistan 10.3% (2005) and in Turkmenistan 3.1% (2006).

The development of National EFA Action Plans in each country has become an important and significant component within the implementation of the Dakar Framework of Action (Dakar, Senegal, 2000). Six EFA goals have been incorporated into national mid-term and long term education development strategies.

The country Mid-Decade Assessment reports, highlighted that after 2000 some specific measures have been introduced to achieve EFA goals.

Considerable progress has begun to show within the implementation of the first EFA goals. In early '90s there was a radical decrease of preschool organizations in all Central Asian countries, which resulted in losing enrolments in the preschool education system. That situation created a priority for the governments - to increase the number of preschool organizations and enrolment. In comparison with 2003, in Kazakhstan there was an increased number of preschool organizations, enrolments were up 15.3% and follow up activities have been undertaken on expansion of government commitments to preschool children. In particular, there was legislation introducing free of charge pre-primary training for children aged 5-6. From 2000 to 2006, state investments to preschool organizations increased by 400%. Expenditure per child increased from 26 500 Tenge (\$181) in 2001 up to 59 900 Tenge (\$481.2) in 2006. In Kyrgyzstan, it is planned to increase enrolment in preschool organizations from 9% to 15 % by 2015. Provision of alternative preschool services is increasing (community and seasonal kindergartens, summer programmes and programmes from international organizations), professional consultations are being organized for parents whose children are out-of-preschool education and various pre-primary programmes are under-going testing. In Tajikistan, the gross preschool enrolment rate increased from 7.9 % in 2000 to 9.2% in 2006. Within the framework of the State programme on preschool education

development for 2006-2010 (adopted in 2005), it is planned to introduce pre-primary groups and classes, to construct preschool organizations and introduce innovative teaching methods. Preschool enrolment in Uzbekistan increased from 18% in 2001 to 22% in 2006; there are different types and forms of preschool organizations such as a combination of kindergartens and schools, part time groups, special, health oriented POs and private POs. In Turkmenistan, much attention is paid to strengthening and improving the quality of preschool services. The standard enrolment in a nursery group is 15-20 children, in groups for children aged 3-7, 20-25 children. Introducing this standard allows teachers to utilize innovative methods and pay more individual attention to their students.

For all Central Asian countries the Constitution guarantees compulsory and free of charge access to quality basic education which is a starting point for implementation of the second EFA goal and also the reason for a high enrolment rate. In countries of the region, enrolment in primary and secondary education is now nearly 100%. For example in Kazakhstan, the enrolment rate in basic school in 2006 was 99.81%, in Kyrgyzstan – 89.9%, Tajikistan – 93.6%, Uzbekistan – 99.7% and in Turkmenistan - 95%. All countries have developed programmes for children from vulnerable groups of the population. The main focus of such programmes is on children from poor families (special measures in supporting with textbooks, feeding, clothes and family support programmes), children with special needs in education and orphans (expansion of special education network, updating of legislative data, imposing of inclusive education methods and development of new types of orphanage houses). In all countries there is a network of schools for ethnic minorities allowing instruction using their mother tongue. In some countries with the support from international organizations and NGOs, there was also access provided to education for street children, migrants, refugees, HIV positive children and children who work.

In contrast, EFA third and fourth goals (life skills, lifelong learning and literacy) are rather new for the region with the Central Asian Forum and its TWGs now, actively promoting and advocating these goals. Individual country analysis in these areas facilitated discussions at national and sub-regional levels and led to the re-thinking the notions “literacy” and “life skills”, as well as re-assessing the role of adult education within the concept of lifelong learning (LLL).

In all EFA MDA country presentations, it was noted that the fifth EFA goal on gender issues in education was achieved at all levels. Gender parity data in all countries is impressive, with the exception of Tajikistan where girls’ enrolment rate from 9th to 10th grade is 0.64% in some regions. The Central Asian republics undertake some measures to ensure gender balance by including gender components into their curricula, advocating and promoting gender equity and overcoming gender stereotypes, development and use of teaching materials and textbooks according to gender expertise.

Significant efforts have been implemented by countries in terms of achieving the sixth EFA goal on improving the quality of education. Special focus was made on four aspects: the development of new national standards, publishing of new textbooks, upgrading of teachers’ qualifications and computerizing and informatization of the teaching-learning process. The issues of establishing a national assessment system and external assessment of learning achievements are topics of paramount importance. New approaches were introduced in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; a unified National Test was introduced in Kazakhstan for example. Kazakhstan also participated in the international programme TIMSS (2007) and is planning to participate in PISA in 2009. Kyrgyzstan had participated in PISA in 2006. Other important components of the provision of quality education are upgrading school infrastructure (renovation and construction of new schools) and improvement of conditions for

teaching-learning process (school laboratories, libraries, equipment). State funds are allocated for such activities in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan but in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan these issues are being solved via international assistance funds.

Existing risks and problems towards achieving EFA goals

In spite of the progress in achieving EFA goals since 2000, all countries stressed the point that some goals will only be achieved partially by 2015.

Access to preschool education in Kazakhstan for example, is currently provided for just 30% of preschool age children. The number of seats in kindergartens is five times less than the number of children of preschool age across the country. Most of the vulnerable groups within the population have no access to preschool education programmes. High poverty level amongst the population in Tajikistan is the main factor leading to limited access to preschool education (though demographic growth is very high). Poor state financing, lack of a comprehensive integrated policy in early childhood education and poor preschool organization facilities also lead to a low enrolment rate. The main reason that restricts access to preschool education in Uzbekistan is a lack of adequate facilities in rural areas; the gap between rural and urban preschool organizations is very considerable.

The second goal on provision of primary/basic education for all children is actually being achieved in all countries of Central Asia but some issues related to provision of quality education and access to education for vulnerable groups of population are still unresolved. In Kazakhstan, obstacles that hamper implementation of the goal in full are: outdated teaching-learning materials and technical facilities, shortage of modern textbooks (provision of new textbooks across the country is only around 75%-80%) and insufficient number of organizations for extra-curricula activities, especially in rural and remote areas. There is a disparity in access to education in different provinces - between urban and rural areas and access for children from different social groups (e.g. only 30% from 120,000 of children with limited abilities have access to education). In Tajikistan, there is a number of problems that limit access to education such as: lack of professional qualified teaching staff, poor use of innovative teaching methods, poor school facilities, outdated content of education and lack of textbooks, teaching materials and manuals. Other problems are relevant as well as unequal access to education. It is especially evident when analysing shifting from lower school level to higher ones (as a result the lack of interest to continue education is more prevalent amongst poor families). There is also a tendency of decreasing girls' enrolment at upper school level and limited access to education for children with special needs. In the presentation of Kyrgyzstan much attention was paid to drop outs and non-attendance problems at schools.

A common regional problem that is related to goal 2 is a lack of reliable statistical data reflecting the real many-sided situation of street children, migrants, children who work, and etc.

Finally, all countries recognized insufficient financing towards the education sector as a crucial factor. In connection with this, it is relevant to mention that despite positive growth of investment to education, all countries except Uzbekistan are lagging behind in terms of increasing state allocation up to a minimum of 6% of GDP recommended by UNESCO.

Regarding the third goal, all countries mentioned lack of full and reliable information and statistical data on non-formal education (NFE), available NFE programmes and services,

quality and relevance of their NFE programmes for the labour market demands. Important issues for consideration are lack of inter-sector and inter-ministerial coordination, a lack of mechanisms to strengthen partnership between formal and non-formal sectors, leading to the situation where NGOs provide education services of low quality, which do not correspond to the existing education standards.

In terms of goal on literacy, it is relevant to mention that countries used traditional interpretation of this notion (not as proposed in UNESCO documents). Literacy rate in member states is rather high and is almost 100%. However, it was recognized that there was a lack in clear definition and interpretation of the term “literacy” that makes it difficult to assess adequately the achievement of this goal at domestic level according to the definition of this term by UNESCO.

Country presentations on the next goal, gender issues, noted that gender parity in access to education is being achieved (with the exception of Tajikistan where girls’ enrolment rate from 9th to 10th grade is 0.64% in some regions). But there are some unsolved issues related to ‘feminizing’ education, gender stereotypes in education content and teaching environment and lack of gender sensitive indicators to assess the real situation.

For the last few years the issue of quality education has become the number one priority in Central Asia. To improve the situation in this field, there is a need not only in reassessment of financial distribution but in the revision of the notion and meaning of ‘quality education.’ During discussions, Forum participants questioned many times what quality education is in modern conditions. Many other relevant questions were raised: How to assess and evaluate quality education and learning achievements? What indicators should be developed? All countries face the problem of data collection and its analysis based on the international indicators, which make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the national education system objectively and moreover, to compare it to the global context.

Draft national MDA reports highlighted common issues and problems for the entire region in terms of equal access to education in urban and rural areas, lack of efficient mechanisms of involvement of children from socially vulnerable groups (refugees, children with special needs, street children), poor training and re-training programmes for teaching staff, a lack of professional qualified teachers in rural schools and an insufficient number of textbooks that lead to poor learning process. Country reports stressed attention on the necessity of improving and strengthening existing education assessment systems.

Follow up actions towards achieving EFA goals

All country reports have a wide range of planned measures and activities to achieve EFA goals by 2015.

In Kazakhstan, it is planned to increase investments to the education sector (up to 4% of GDP), increase the state allocation to preschool education system by 2010 up 1% of GDP, and providing by 2015, compulsory and free of charge preschool education from the age of three. It is also planned, a step by step decrease the combined classes of basic and upper secondary levels in small schools and to cancel lessons in third shift by 2008, expand the boarding school’s network, building 216 new secondary and vocational schools and improvement of coordination between various Ministries and departments through further development and support of the Centre for Academic Recognition. Other relevant measures include further equipping schools with updated equipment, upgrading the learning process using ICT and ensuring unlimited access of all schools to the Internet by 2008 and establishing adequate

education infrastructure to ensure the right of every citizen to quality education, including citizens from rural and remote areas, strengthening of the intersectoral approach for more efficiency of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Kyrgyzstan plans to ensure access to preschool and secondary education especially in the poorest regions of the country: the mobilization of resources, involving the community for finding solutions in school issues and expansion of inclusive education programmes are all targeted measures. It is planned to transfer financing per head, helping to strengthen the NFE sector and establish a renewed data base on NFE in gender and regional sections. Special measures are focused on the assessment and monitoring of a quality education system through creating an independent evaluating system that will lead to improvement at all levels of secondary education and the development of a secondary education schools accreditation and attestation programme. Further actions will be undertaken to create a competitive environment in schools through supporting NFE and informal education.

In Tajikistan, measures on increasing pre-school education financing and ensuring provision of quality preschool services have been developed by introducing new technologies and involvement of parents and the community. Also a priority issue has been set-out to increase access to education for girls and children from socially vulnerable groups of the population. As part of this process, CEDAW recommendations for Tajikistan encourage the increase of the age of marriage from 17 to 18, which will be lobbied in correspondence with the realization of the Convention on the rights of a child. It is planned to develop a package of suggestions on promoting private schools. In vocational education, efforts will be focused on establishing a dynamic vocational system relevant to the national labour market, in other words an adaptable curriculum to the needs of the labour market whilst including active involvement of employers in the process of professional staff training. Issues of adult education are also included as a national priority and focus will be on development of training and re-training programmes for migrants, women, and young workers that didn't have access to education programmes during the civil war period. Another step for ensuring provision of quality education is the establishing of an independent National Centre for quality education assessment.



In Uzbekistan, the State has highlighted its targets within its secondary education development programme. Implementation of the following issues are under special focus: safe access to quality preschool and general secondary education, both in urban and rural areas, the expansion of out of school (extra curriculum) programmes for school age children and the development of programmes for children from vulnerable groups, the overall improvement in quality within its education assessment system.

Turkmenistan plans, within its “Strategy for economic, political and cultural development until 2020”, to implement activities that will bring the education system up to the level of developed countries. Priority activities will be to focus on the training of specialists on a free of charge basis, the improvement of material and technical facilities within its educational institutions and to continue the process of computerization along with introducing innovative teaching methods.



CONCLUDING SESSION: RESOLUTION OF THE SIXTH CENTRAL ASIAN EDUCATION FORUM

The final session was chaired by Mr. Tajimurod Tursunov, EFA focal point, Ministry of Public Education, Head of the Uzbekistan Delegation.

In their concluding speeches, **Ms. K. N. Shamshidinova**, Vice-Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and **Mr. A. Zouev**, UNICEF Representative in Kazakhstan, expressed their gratitude to country delegations and partner organizations for active, fruitful and competent participation in the Forum.



Mr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Director of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau of Education, thanked Forum organizers for a successful event and remarked that “country presentations on EFA MDA demonstrated a good balance of achievements and still existing problems”. He also emphasized that more efforts to analyze educational quality are needed, as

well as a functional literacy assessment that would provide appropriate statistics. Mr. Shaeffer shared his comments on country presentations, stressing that inclusive education is one of the international trends aimed at integrating children with disabilities into the learning process of schools. Furthermore, he noted that the presentations showed that most countries had achieved gender equity; however, such aspects as gender stereotypes in textbooks, career promotion of women and men were less analyzed. Speaking about the content of education, a major focus was made on aspects such as sciences and language. Without a doubt, those are important as well as civil consciousness, tolerance, and life values as dialogue of civilizations. One of his recommendations was to look at education as a tool for sustainable development. In other words, “it is crucial to turn the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment into one of the essential components of education policy with the capacity of response at the very level of the UN”.

The Resolution was adopted according to the results of Forum discussions.

RESOLUTION OF THE SIXTH CENTRAL ASIAN EDUCATION FORUM

(Astana, 27 June 2007)

Participants of the Sixth Central Asian Education Forum, realize the importance of the international initiative ‘*Education for All*’, aiming at building a better world in the 21st century and improving life quality of all the people through education,

Support joint efforts of Central Asian countries, UNESCO, UNICEF, and other related partners towards implementing the *Millennium Development Goals* proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in the *Millennium Declaration* of 08 September 2000, as well as for resolving the tasks defined by the *World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990)* and *World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000)* in line with the priorities of the *UN Literacy Decade (2003-2012)* and *UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)* relevant to the interests of countries in the region and recommend the measures as follows:

1. The findings of the CARK Education Forum Review that raises fundamental and critical issues of its efficiency, effectiveness and commitment of participating countries of organizing and assisting the Forum and also its sustainability must be taken into account.

Since EFA is the major topic of the Forum, the needs of participating countries must be met in the context of national, regional and international priorities.

A wider vision of the Central Asian Education Forum mission must be approved.

The Central Asian Forum must be supported as a coordinating and strategic platform based on country priorities, strategic goals and objectives, facilitating the attainment of EFA goals and the education reforms implementation process.

It should be agreed that further movement forward should be based on scenario 2 (the alternation of technical and political formats of the Forum) proposed in the discussion of findings of *CARK Education Forum Review over 2001-2006*.

The following major issues must be elaborated with this purpose:

- a) Forum objectives must focus on two major goals: strengthening technical capacity and solidifying regional partnership;
- b) Revise the role and format of Forum annual meetings, working groups, the Executive Committee and Secretariat;
- c) Revise the role of UNICEF, UNESCO and governments of participating countries and strengthen the role of other stakeholders who support the Education Forum.

For these purposes, the task force should be established consisting of representatives from each participating country, UNICEF, UNESCO and stakeholders who provide clear recommendations on the Forum format and its work to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

2. Integrate national EFA Mid-Decade Assessments results into country education policy reforms, national development strategy, poverty reduction strategy and sustainable development;

3. Ensure access to education for people currently excluded from active social, economic and cultural life of the society. This is primarily related to vulnerable social groups of the population: people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, rural and remote area residents, post-conflict zone residents and environmental disaster zone residents, where quality and access to education is inadequate;

4. Promote dialogue on reforms of preschool and secondary general education issues through organizing joint activities within the Central Asian Education Forum;

5. Develop or/and revise preschool education policy ensuring the maximum enrolment of children, prioritizing with socially vulnerable groups of the population;

6. Efforts must be focused on enhancing the quality of education services related to the six EFA goals; namely, to speed up the process of unification of education standards aiming at competence development, training students for real life, changing the teaching process and the role of a student as an active participant of the teaching-learning process;

7. Intensify the use of communication, information technologies and distance learning education within the national education system to increase the quality of education combined with access for disadvantaged groups within society, including children in need and the population residing in rural and remote areas;
8. Enhance development of the national education quality monitoring and assessment system as well as establish the regional education quality monitoring system. To improve education statistical data collection for further analysis;
9. Recommend to relevant Ministries and departments of participating countries to develop and implement HIV/AIDS prevention programs in secondary schools. Introduce to the curricula of higher pedagogical institutions, organizations and/or primary and secondary vocational institutions a compulsory course on HIV/AIDS prevention;
10. The Forum Secretariat should prepare the Sixth Central Asian Education Forum report to the next meeting of the Executive Committee as well as options for the next Forum theme.
11. Ministries of Education of participating countries should consider partial cost sharing in terms of financial support to conduct the Executive Committee and Education Forum.



APPENDICES



**The 6th Central Asia Education Forum
27 June 2007**

AGENDA

08:30 – 09:00 Registration

**SESSION 1
OPENING OF THE FORUM**

Chairperson: **Mr. Zhanseit Tuimebaev, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

09:00 – 09:45 **Opening ceremony:**

- Opening speech of **Mr. Zhanseit Tuimebaev**, Minister of Education and Science of the RK
- Report and resolution of the Fifth Forum, **Ms Marina Hamraeva**, Ministry of Education the Republic of Turkmenistan - Handing the Forum Flag over from the Government of Turkmenistan to the Government of Kazakhstan
- Welcome by **Mr. Sheldon Shaeffer**, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
- Welcome by **Mr. Alexander Zouev**, Head of UNICEF Office in Kazakhstan
- Welcome by **Mr. Dusen Kaseinov**, Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO

SESSION 2

EFA – A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

Chairperson: **Mrs. Elmira Imanalieva, Deputy Minister, Head of the Kyrgyz Delegation**

09:45- 10:05 **EFA – A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT**
Mr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Director, UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau

10:05- 10:25 "*Education for Some More than Others*", a Regional Report on Education in CEE/CIS
Mr. Philippe Testot-Ferry, UNICEF Regional Advisor, Education & ECD, Regional Office for CEE/CIS and Baltic States

10:25 – 10:55 Discussion and questions

10:55 -11:15 Coffee-break

SESSION 3

THE CARK EDUCATION FORUM REVIEW – Round Table

Chairperson: **Mrs. Irena Karimova, Deputy Minister, Head of the Tajikistan**

Delegation

- 11:15 – 11:45 Findings from the CARK Education Forum Review, presentation by **Mrs. Sonal Zaveri**, UNICEF Consultant
- 11:45 – 12:15 Discussion and conclusions

SESSION 4

MDA: PROGRESS TOWARDS THE EFA GOALS

Chairperson: **Mrs. Marina Hamraeva, Head of the Turkmenistan Delegation**

- 12:15 – 12:45 Country presentations
- Kazakhstan
- 12:45 – 14:00 Lunch time
- 14:00 – 16:00 Country presentations continue
- Kyrgyzstan
 - Tajikistan
 - Turkmenistan
 - Uzbekistan
- 16:00- 16:30 General discussion, endorsements of national work plans on how to complete the MDA reports and recommendations for the national follow-up.
- 16:30 – 17:00 Coffee-break

SESSION 5

CONCLUDING SESSION

Chairperson: **Mr. Tajomurod Tursunov, Ministry of National Education, Head of the Uzbekistan Delegation**

- 17:00 – 18:00 Adoption of the draft decisions/resolution of the 6th Forum
Closing address by **Mrs. Kulyash Shamshidinova**, Deputy-Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Concluding remarks by Mr. **Sheldon Shaeffer**, Director, UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau and **Mr. Alexander Zouev**, UNICEF Representative in Kazakhstan

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- 19:00 Reception on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Day 3

28 JUNE 2007

- 09:00 – 12:30 Study visits to educational organizations in Astana:
Secondary school # 1, 50, 54, preschool # 50, Polytechnic college
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break, departure of Forums' participants

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**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
OF THE SIXTH CENTRAL ASIAN EDUCATION FORUM**

26-27 JUNE 2007, ASTANA

No	Name	Position
International and donor organizations		
1	Philippe Testot-Ferry	UNICEF Regional Adviser, UNICEF Regional Office for CEE and CIS
2	Dipa Groover	UNICEF Child Early Development Regional Adviser, UNICEF Regional Office for CEE and CIS
3	Esther Zukh	UNICEF Consultant
4	Sonal Zaverie	UNICEF Consultant
5	Alexander Zouev	UNICEF Representative in Kazakhstan
6	Alyona Sielchenok	UNICEF Deputy Representative in Kazakhstan
7	Tatiana Aderikhina	National Officer for Education and Child Protection, Kazakhstan
8	Violetta Krasnikova	UNICEF Project Assistant, Kazakhstan
9	Sultan Hudaibergenov	Public Relations Coordinator, UNICEF Kazakhstan
10	Gulmira Abidhojayeva	Assistant Public Relations Officer, UNICEF Kazakhstan
11	Aikumis Seksenbayeva	Communication Assistant, UNICEF Kazakhstan
12	Nurbek Teleshaliyev	Education Program Officer, UNICEF Kyrgyz Republic
13	Nurul Islam	Education Program Specialist, UNICEF Tajikistan
14	Marina Zhukova	Education Program Specialist, UNICEF Tajikistan
15	Gulshat Amandurdyeva	Education Program Specialist, UNICEF Turkmenistan
16	Alisher Abdusolomov	Education Program Specialist, UNICEF Uzbekistan
17	Sheldon Shaeffer	Director, UNESCO Asian-Pacific Regional Bureau , Bangkok, Thailand
18	Ko-Chi Tung	UIS Regional Adviser, UNESCO Bangkok, Thailand
19	Alexandra Denes	Consultant, UNESCO Bangkok, Thailand
20	Inna Melnikova	Education Program Specialist, UNESCO Almaty
21	Aigul Khalafova	Education Program Specialist, UNESCO Almaty
22	Vlastimil Samek	Representative, UN Department for Public Information, Almaty
23	Undra Suren	Specialist, International Labor Organization, Almaty
Diplomatic Mission		

24	Mukhamed Hodzhamammedovich Abalakov	Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador, Turkmenistan
25	Akbarsho Iskandarovich Iskandarov	Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador, Republic of Tajikistan
26	Zhumagul Saadanbekovich Saadanbekov	Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador, Kyrgyz Republic
Kyrgyz Republic		
27	Elmira Imanaliyeva	Deputy Minister of Education and Science, National EFA Coordinator
28	Larissa Miroshnichenko	Adviser to Rector of KSU after Zh. Balasagyn, EFA national consultant
29	Yevgeniya Boiko	Senior Specialist of the Department for Strategy and Planning, MoES, Adult Education thematic group coordinator , coordinator for the EFA MDA report preparation
30	Aziz Murataliyev	Chief Specialist, Economic Department, MoES, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
Republic of Tajikistan		
31	Irena Karimova	Vice-Minister of Education, Head of the Delegation, coordinator for the EFA MDA report preparation
32	Tazarf Nasimova	Chief Specialist, Department of International Relations, Ministry of Education, Republic of Tajikistan, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
33	Iskandar Aminov	Deputy Head, Human Resources Department, Ministry of Education, Republic of Tajikistan, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
34	Yelena Budnikova	Statistician, National Institute for Statistics, expert for the EFA MDA report
35	Nargis Boboyeva	Chief Specialist, EIMS Department, Ministry of Education, Republic of Tajikistan, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
36	Guljahon Bobosadykova	Director, NGO “Women with a University Degree”, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
Turkmenistan		
37	Marina Hamrayeva	Chief Specialist, Ministry of Education , Head of the Delegation, coordinator for the EFA MDA report preparation
38	Ata Haldzhanov	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
39	Olga Sopieyeva	Statistician, National Institute for Statistics, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
Republic of Uzbekistan		
40	Tadjomurod Tursunov	Senior Specialist, Department for Planning, Head of the

		Delegation, coordinator for the EFA MDA report preparation
41	Kamal Yakubov	International Affairs Department, Ministry of Public Education, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
42	Shukhrat Abdullayev	“Fact” Research Agency, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
Republic of Kazakhstan		
43	Zhanseit Tuimebayev	Minister of Education and Science, Republic of Kazakhstan
44	Kulyash Shamshidinova	Vice-Minister of Education and Science, EFA focal point
45	Dusen Kaseyinov	Secretary General, National Commission for UNESCO Affairs
46	Altynai Dusekova	Executive Secretary, National Commission for UNESCO Affairs
47	Mayra Sanatova	Director, Department of Preschool and Secondary General Education, MoES, RK
48	Serik Irsaliyev	Director, Department for Education Development Strategy and International Cooperation, MoES, RK
49	Zhumazhan Zhukenov	Chief, Department for Preschool and Secondary General Education, MoES, RK
50	Mayra Rahimzhanova	Chief, Department for Preschool and Secondary General Education, MoES, RK
51	Gauhar Saymsayeva	Chief Specialist, Department for Preschool and Secondary General Education, MoES, RK, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
52	Mayrash Ishchanova	Chief Specialist, Department for Preschool and Secondary General Education, MoES, RK, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
53	Rimma Musina	Chief, Department for Education Development Strategy and International Cooperation, MoES, RK
54	Tildash Bituova	Director, Republican Centre “Daryn”
55	Berikzhan Almuhambetov	Director, Director “Bobek”
56	Altynay Zhaytapova	Deputy Director, Republican In-service Teacher Training Institute, EFA TWG focal point for adult education
57	Zhazira Nurmukhametova	Director, Republican Centre “Preschool Childhood”
58	Bazar Damitov	Director, National Centre, MoES, RK
59	Yuri Shokamanov	First Deputy Chairman, Agency of the RK for Statistics, expert for the EFA MDA report preparation
60	Shaizada Tasbulatova	Director, Association “Education for All in Kazakhstan”, TWG sub-regional coordinator for life skills of the Central Asian Education Forum, coordinator for the EFA MDA report preparation
61	Valentina Beloslyudtseva	Specialist, Association “Education for All in

		Kazakhstan”
62	Saule Kalikova	Director, Centre for Analysis of Education Policy, Educational Center “Bilim-Central Asia”
63	Asima Biamedina	Director, Department of Education, Astana
64	Kazi Kusanov	Director, Department of Education, Akmola Oblast
65	Shamen Akhimbekova	Chairman, Association of Initiative Schools of RK
66	Esengazy Imangaliyev	Director, Department of Education, Karaganda Oblast
67	Zhanbol Zhilbayev	Director, Department of Education, Karaganda
68	Henry Shek	Director, Department of Education, Kostanai Oblast
69	Bakhreddin Karibzhanov	Director, Department of Education, Pavlodar Oblast
70	Murat Isakhanov	Deputy Director, Department of Education, Astana
71	Zauresh Isaeva	Manager of General and Ethnic Pedagogy Department, Kazakh State University named after Al-Pharabi
72	K.A. Nuranova	Director, Secondary School No. 3, Zhetygen village, Almaty Oblast
Interpreters		
73	Timur Nurpeissov	Interpreter
74	Olga Bolotova	Interpreter

CENTRAL ASIAN EDUCATION FORUM 2002-2007: BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

Between 2002 and 2007, six meetings of the Central Asian Forum were held (see Appendix 3: *Central Asian Forum 2002-2007: Brief Chronology*).

2002: Almaty, Kazakhstan. The First Forum was attended by four countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The Forum participants had a unique opportunity to present a systematic situation review for all countries in the context of key aspects of education reform such as policy changes, new financing approaches, ensuring access to education and quality and development of new standards.

2003: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The Second Central Asian Forum discussed the improvement of National EFA Action Plans. To this end, the Forum stressed wider participation by all stakeholders not only in fulfillment of education policy, but also in its development and planning.

2004: Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The major issues reviewed at the third Central Asian Forum were gender balance in education policy, incorporation of HIV/AIDS topics into the learning curriculum and the creation of a user-friendly school environment. It was the first time Turkmenistan attended the Forum.

2005: Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The agenda of the fourth Central Asian Forum included the issues of improving quality and access to education as key areas for education reforms in every country of the region. Forum participants suggested that the fifth Thematic Group for Early Childhood Development (ECD) be established and headed by Turkmenistan.

2006: Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The topic of the fifth Central Asian Forum, “Progress towards Achieving EFA Goals”, related to the discussion of the primary aspects of the 2007 Mid-Decade Assessment in attainment of EFA goals by Central Asian countries.

2007: Astana, Kazakhstan. The key topic of the sixth Central Asian Forum was a range of issues related to the discussion of the reports of five Central Asian countries in the context of the Mid-Decade Assessment of the six EFA goals. In addition, the Forum participants were presented the findings from the CARK Education Forum Review over 2002 to 2006 as the basis for identifying further steps with a view to improving cooperation efficiency within the framework of the Forum.