

Ethiopia

Gennet Zewdie

Minister of Education



Mrs. Gennet Zewdie holds a Diploma in Business Education from the Haile Sellasie I University, a B.Sc. degree from the Plymouth State College, and a M.Sc. degree in Business Education from the Suffolk University in Boston. She subsequently became Assistant Professor at the Addis Ababa University. She has participated and presented papers in many international and regional conferences and seminars, and she has published articles in the field of education. In November 1991, she was appointed as Vice-Minister of Education in charge of Higher Education. From 1993 to 1997 and from 1999 to date she has been Member of the Executive Board of

UNESCO, and since 1999 Member of the Board of UNESCO (Capacity Building Institute for Africa). She was from 1993 to 1999 Chairperson of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Since 1992 she has been Minister of Education.

Fighting poverty through education - the Ethiopian context

Humanity everywhere in the world is being haunted by multitudes of problems and challenges, which, in effect, are manifestations of poverty - humanity's single most deadly problem.

Thanks now to the many research studies, we are beginning to understand that the causes and dimensions of poverty are many and interrelated. Poverty can be manifested in any one of the following dimensions: Monetary dimensions: absence of income or limited consumption, Non-monetary dimension: lack of access to public services or lack to opportunities, Vulnerability and insecurity, and Powerlessness and voiceless, etc.

For the poor to effectively fight poverty the following facts need to be understood. a) Poverty is a complex and multi-dimensional in nature, b) Poverty is not an abstract phenomenon. It exists objectively and can be measured, monitored and, therefore, minimized and eventually eradicated. So what should be done to break out of this deadlock? The answer lies, on our ability and capacity to adopt integrated development strategy giving prominence to crosscutting sectors such as education.

Accordingly, Ethiopia's Education and Training Policy and Strategy was developed in 1994. This was followed by a sector Program better known as Education Sector Development Program (ESDP).

Our policies and programs are generally based on the understanding that poverty is basically a rural phenomenon and cannot be effectively implemented without the involvement of the rural masses - especially the poor and women.

The primary goal of our education policy is to create a new generation that has positive outlook towards living, learning and transforming rural Ethiopia. An agriculture-oriented educational system is needed in Ethiopia not only to increase agricultural productivity but also to minimize urban unemployment thereby alleviate poverty.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the UNESCO's community to continue to support our endeavors, if education is to play its role in reducing poverty. *Z*