



SIDE-EVENT 5

Quality Education, Equity and Sustainable Development: A holistic vision through UNESCO's four World Education Conferences 2008-2009

organised by UNESCO – The Education Sector

UNESCO is holding a series of landmark global education conferences in 2008 and 2009. The 48th session of the ICE will be followed by:

- the **World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development**: *“Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade”* (31 March-2 April 2009, Bonn, Germany);
- **CONFINTEA VI** (International Conference on Adult Education): *“Learning and Living for a Viable Future: the Power of Adult Learning”* (19-22 May 2009, Belém, Brazil);
- the **2009 World Conference** *“The New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research for Societal Change and Development”* (5-8 July 2009, Paris, France).

Background

Education is a right and a foundation for sustainable development. Poverty cannot be eradicated without education. Education empowers people with the knowledge and skills to improve their lives and with the values and attitudes to live together.

But despite international commitments, quality education is still denied to millions of children, youth and adults around the world. As education systems are expanding to accommodate more learners, they are challenged to develop strategies that promote inclusion, quality learning, flexibility and innovation. UNESCO must ensure that Education for All (EFA) remains a priority on the global agenda while also promoting the development of education systems which respond to all learning needs - beyond the EFA goals.

A shared vision guides these four events: one of education systems that encourage inclusion, quality learning, flexibility and innovation. UNESCO's conference cycle aims to encourage a dynamic and far-reaching reflection on the transformative power of education to serve this vision and to engage policymakers, researchers and a range of institutions in reorienting education systems - from early childhood to higher education, in formal and non-formal settings - to promote equity, quality, lifelong learning, innovation and sustainable development.

Objectives

- Provide information and raise awareness about the common threads and synergies between the themes addressed by UNESCO's four education conferences of which ICE is the first;
- Raise a certain number of questions, issues or perspectives which could inform and enrich the discussions of the upcoming three conferences;
- Contribute to the creation of a critical mass of people who understand better the holistic approach to education challenges which the four conferences tackle from different angles, and who could be advocates of this comprehensive education agenda.

Panel Composition

Ms Ana Luiza Machado (Chairperson)

Deputy Assistant Director-General for Education Programme Management (UNESCO)

Mr Mamadou Ndoye

Former Executive Secretary of ADEA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa)
2008 Laureate of the Comenius Medal

Ms Sylvia Irene Schmelkes de Valle

Director of the Research Institute for the Development of Education (Iberoamerican University of Mexico City)
2008 Laureate of the Comenius Medal

Mr Sheldon Shaeffer

Director of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.

Support Documentation

- UNESCO document “Quality Education, Equity and Sustainable Development: A holistic vision through UNESCO's four World Education Conferences 2008-2009”
- UNESCO Brochure on the four conferences
- Flyers on the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, on CONFINTEA VI and on the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education and Research