DRAFT AGENDA

REGIONAL MINISTERIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Including all children in quality learning

10-13 DECEMBER 2013
ISTANBUL, TURKEY
**Day 1: 10 December 2013**

**Masters of ceremony:** Ms. Esra Omeroglu and Ms. Sandie Blanchet, UNICEF Representative in Romania

1. **The Call for Action:**
   Seeking political commitment for equity in education

The first component of the Regional Ministerial Education Conference will help set an agenda for quality basic education in the region through the agreement of country delegations to collaborate on the Call for Action to include all children in quality learning. It will focus on strengthening political commitments toward effective reforms for improving equity in education access and in learning. It will foster greater dialogue and horizontal cooperation in the region and beyond, between sectors and between countries.

07.45–08.30  **REGISTRATION** (Participants may also register in their hotels the evening of 9 December)

08.30–10.00  **SESSION 1: WELCOMING SESSION – OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**

**Key note addresses**
- Ms. Yoka Brandt, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
- Ms. Anna Susarenco, Youth Representative, Moldova
- Mr. Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
- H.E. Mr. Nabi Avcı, Minister of National Education, Turkey

10.00–10.15  **COFFEE BREAK**

10.15–11.15  **SESSION 2: CALL FOR ACTION – INCLUDING ALL CHILDREN IN QUALITY LEARNING**

The 2015 deadline for the MDGs is fast approaching. This is a pivotal moment for collective action. The achievements of the past decade, in the region and beyond, have shown what it takes to succeed: political will at the highest levels, sound policies, and resources to scale up proven methods. However to achieve a breakthrough, an unprecedented mobilization of all traditional and new partners will be needed. The Call for Action document that will be presented in Session 2 urges governments throughout Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia to come together to collaborate to bring about Education Equity Now.

**Chairperson: Mr. Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO**

**Situation of education equity in the region: Setting the stage for the Call for Action**
Ms. Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

**Presentation of Call for Action**
H.E. Mr. Nabi Avci, Minister of National Education, Turkey

**Presentation of the Youth Statement on Education**
Ms. Ana Maria Duminica, Youth Representative, Romania

**Summary remarks and conclusion by Chairperson**

11.15–13.00  **LUNCH**
3.1 Panel Discussion: Global concern for out of school children – Toward inclusive education and equity for the most marginalized children

Human rights-based approach to achieving equity in education
Ms. Rita Izsák, Independent Expert on Minority Issues (video statement)

Including every child in school
Ms. Diane Richler, Joseph P Kennedy, Jr. International Fellow

The Global Out of School Children Initiative
Mr. Albert Motivans, Head of Education Statistics, UNESCO Institute of Statistics

Discussants:
- Ms. Mukkades Nalbant, Deputy Minister of Education, Bulgaria
- Ms. Lia Gigauri, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Georgia
- Ms. Vesna Vučurović, Deputy Minister of Education, Montenegro
- H.E. Mr. Remus Pricopie, Minister of Education, Romania
- Ms. Tojiniso Fayzaliyevna Mahmadova, Deputy Minister of Education, Tajikistan

Questions and comments from Plenary

Summary remarks and conclusion by Chairperson

COFFEE BREAK

3.2 Panel Discussion: Adolescents, equity and upper secondary education

Ending Early School Leaving
- Mr. João Delgado, Head of Unit for School Education Policy, Comenius Programme, European Commission, DG Education and Culture
- Mr. Fred Voncken, Director Early School Leaving, Ministry of Education, The Netherlands

Discussants:
- Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Deputy Minister of Education, Azerbaijan
Day 2: 11 December 2013

Master of Ceremony: Mr. Mark Hereward, UNICEF Representative in Azerbaijan

08.30–10.15  SESSION 4: EVERY CHILD SUPPORTED BY EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS – THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL NATURE OF EDUCATION

Policy insight debate – Good governance is the foundation of equitable education systems. To advance equity in school access and learning outcomes, governance and financing mechanisms must be efficient, effective, decentralized, provide a child-friendly learning environment and explicitly supportive of marginalized children's needs. In Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the past twenty years have been a time of transition for many governance systems, with decentralization, public finance reform and changes in structures taking place widely. Many challenges remain in establishing strong equity-enhancing governance system. Session 4 will invite a debate around the following key questions: (1) What are the key results achieved in reforming education finance and governance systems in the region? (2) What are the priority challenges for improving governance systems, and particularly coordination across sectors? (3) What governance reforms have proven most effective in creating child-friendly learning environments for children?

Chairperson: Ms. Monika Linn, Chief, Development Policies and Cross-Sectoral Coordination Unit, UN Economic Commission for Europe

Panel Discussion: Promoting collaborative governance systems and child-friendly learning environments to enhance equity in education and improve labour market outcomes

Education financing and governance for equity
Mr. Alberto Rodriguez, Director of Education, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank

Discussants:
- Mr. Robert Stepanyan, Head of Department of Monitoring and Development Programmes, Ministry of Education, Armenia
- Mr. Vassily Budkevich, Deputy Minister of Education, Belarus
- Ms. Sabina Glasovac, Assistant Minister and Head, Directorate for Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Education, Croatia
- Mr. Yessengazy Imangaliyev, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Kazakhstan
- Ms. Rie Vejs-Kjeldgaard, Regional Director a.i., International Labour Organization

Questions and comments from the plenary
Summary remarks and conclusion by Chairperson

10.15–10.45  COFFEE BREAK

10.45–12.30  SESSION 5: EVERY CHILD LEARNING – ACHIEVING EQUITY IN LEARNING OUTCOMES
Policy insight debate – Education is ultimately judged by the learning outcomes that students take away from school. Learning outcomes determine the skills, competencies, values and knowledge that young people will carry into the labour market, society and their future families. In Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, many students – more than half in some countries, according to PISA 2009 – leave school without the basic skills and knowledge needed to engage productively in their countries’ workforce and society. Students from disadvantaged social groups achieve learning levels far below their wealthier peers, creating large equity gaps in schooling outcomes and thus labour market access. Session 5 will invite debate around the following key questions: (1) What are the key challenges in improving equity in learning outcomes for the most marginalized children? (2) How is evidence on learning outcomes best gathered and monitored? (3) What policy approaches that have proven effective in the region for improving learning levels among the most marginalized groups? and (4) How can those reforms be integrated into the broader education laws and policies?

Chairperson: Mr. Alberto Rodriguez, Director of Education, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank

Panel Discussion: The Learning Imperative

Linking Education Participation and Learning
Ms. Carol Bellamy, Former Chairperson of the Global Partnership for Education

The Learning Imperative
Ms. Josephine Bourne, Associate Director, Education, UNICEF

Monitoring teacher quality
Ms. Kristen Weatherby, OECD, Senior Analyst, Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) Programme

Discussants:
- Ms. Nora Malaj, Deputy Minister of Education, Albania
- H.E. Mr. Spiro Ristovski, Minister of Education, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Mr. Geldymammed Geldymammedov, Deputy Minister of Education, Turkmenistan
- Mr. Bakhtiyor Daniyarov, Deputy Minister of Public Education, Uzbekistan

Questions and comments from the plenary
Summary remarks and conclusion by Chairperson

12.30–14.00
LUNCH, INCLUDING PRESENTATION BY YOUTH PARTICIPANTS SUPPORTED BY UNICEF

14.00–15.45
SESSION 6: EVERY CHILD LEARNING EARLY AND ENROLLING ON TIME – IMPROVING EQUITY AND QUALITY IN EARLY LEARNING SERVICES

Policy insight debate – Early childhood education is the most powerful equalizer of inequities in school access and learning outcomes. It is a right for all children and a global commitment spelled out in the Education for All goals. Yet across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, access to early childhood education programmes remains severely limited. The absence of early education services coupled with the lack of clear starting age policies means that many children, often the most marginalized, enrol late in primary school – sometimes not until age 8. Thus marginalized children begin school already one to two academic years behind their peers from wealthier families, making it extremely difficult for them to catch up before the end of basic education. Session 6 will incite discussion on the following key questions: (1) What results have been achieved in expanding access to early childhood education services? (2) What legislative and policy approaches have been most effective in expanding access to early childhood education services and in improving the quality of those services? (3) What are the effective policy practices for ensuring on-time enrolment in primary school? (4) How can countries ensure
that the most marginalized children access quality early learning services and enrol on time?

Chairperson: Ms. Diane Richler, Joseph P Kennedy, Jr. International Fellow

Panel Discussion: Early education and school readiness – Expanding access and improving quality

Quality early education services: A key strategy for equity in education
• Ms. Caroline Arnold, Director of Education, Aga Khan Foundation
• Ms. Sarah Klaus, Director, Early Childhood Programme, Open Society Foundations

The Starting Age Imperative
Mr. Keith Lewin, Professor of International Education and Development and Director of the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), University of Sussex

Discussants:
• H.E. Mr. Sredoje Novic, Minister of Civil Affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina
• H.E. Mr. Kanat Sadykov, Minister of Education, Kyrgyzstan
• H.E. Ms. Maia Sandu, Minister of Education, Moldova

Questions and comments from plenary
Summary remarks and conclusion by Chairperson

15.45–16.15 COFFEE BREAK


Education is a crucial component in the discussions around the post-2015 development agenda. It is important as a goal and it is important as a strategy for achieving all development goals. In this session, speakers will make the link between the Call for Action and the ongoing discussions around the post-2015 development agenda. These discussions will provide a vision for the way forward for the Call for Action.

Chairperson: Ms. Carol Bellamy, Former Chairperson of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

Linking to discussions on the Post-2015 Agenda
• Mr. Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO [written statement]
• Ms. Monika Linn, Chief, Development Policies and Cross-Sectoral Coordination Unit UN Economic Commission for Europe
• Ms. Yoka Brandt, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
• H.E. Mr. Nabi Avci, Minister of National Education, Turkey

18.00 PRESS CONFERENCE

18.00 DEPARTURE FOR GALA DINNER

19.30–21.30 GALA DINNER HOSTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY
Day 3: 12 December 2013

Master of Ceremony: Mr. Benjamin Perks, UNICEF Representative in Montenegro

2. Strategies for equity:
Working together to implement the Call for Action

The second component of the Conference will provide a forum for knowledge sharing, learning and exchange of good practices between countries and partners on the strategies for achieving the goals of the Call for Action. Discussions will focus on an exchange of successful practices for reducing inequities in education access and learning between countries and partners.

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SESSION 8: STRATEGIES FOR INCLUDING EVERY CHILD IN SCHOOL – REDUCING DISCRIMINATION, IMPROVING DATA AND CLOSING SYSTEM GAPS

Governments in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia have made much progress in past decades in advancing universal education. However, still a region in transition, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia continues to struggle with policy environments that generate inefficiencies in management that translate into obstacles preventing children from learning and flourishing in schools. This session aims to create an exchange between countries and between countries and experts about strategies that have proven effective in tackling those inefficiencies and removing the barriers keeping children out of school. It focuses particularly on ending discrimination, closing data and policy gaps and developing policies to prevent early school leaving.

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Session 8.1: Reducing Discrimination Against Marginalized Children

Chairpersons: Ms. Sarah Klaus, Director, Early Childhood Programme, Open Society Foundations

Key Note Address – Strategies for ending inequities in education participation and learning
Mr. Keith Lewin, Professor of International Education and Development and Director of the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), University of Sussex

The Right to Inclusive Education: UNICEF’s Position
Mr. Gopal Mitra, Programme Specialist, Disability Section, UNICEF NYHQ

‘It’s About Ability’: Changing perspectives on disability in Montenegro
Ms. Vesna Vučurović, Deputy Minister of Education, Montenegro

Tackling discrimination against Roma children – Good practices from the region
Ms. Anasztazia Nagy, Country Officer for Roma Education Fund in Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia

Sharing experience from Romania – Reducing the exclusion of Roma communities
Ms. Liliana Preoteasa, General Director, General Directorate for Education and Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Education, Romania

Discussion

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COFFEE BREAK
11.00–12.00  **Session 8.2: Closing data gaps on out of school children**  
*Chairpersons: Ms. Sarah Klaus, Director, Early Childhood Programme, Open Society Foundations*

**Improving data on out of school children in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia**  
Mr. Albert Motivans, Head of Education Statistics, UNESCO Institute of Statistics; and Ms. Erin Tanner, Education Specialist, UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

**Improving data on children from Roma communities – MICS in Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
Ms. Sanja Kabil, Education Officer, UNICEF, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Improving data on children with disabilities**  
Mr. Daniel Mont, Principal Research Associate, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London

**Discussion**

**Summary remarks and conclusion by Chairperson**

12.00–13.00  **Session 8.3: Upper secondary education – Preventing dropouts and promoting relevant skills and employability**  
*Chairperson: Mr. Albert Motivans, Head of Education Statistics, UNESCO Institute of Statistics*

**School to Work Transition: Promoting skills for the 21st Century**  
Ms. Margarete Sachs-Israel, Programme Specialist, EFA Global Partnerships Team, UNESCO

**Monitoring Early School Leavers in the Netherlands**  
Mr. Fred Voncken, Director Early School Leaving, Ministry of Education, Netherlands

**Collecting data on OOSC of Upper Secondary School Age**  
Mr. Salih Çelik, Deputy Under-Secretary, Ministry of National Education, Turkey

**Discussion**

**Summary remarks and conclusion by Chairperson**

13.00–14.00  **LUNCH**

14.00–15.15  **SESSION 9: STRATEGIES TO FOSTER GOOD GOVERNANCE – ENHANCING EDUCATION FINANCING AND COORDINATION ACROSS SECTORS**

Financing and coordination mechanisms are key strategies for reducing inequities in education. In Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, monitoring and evaluation systems need strengthening and communities and young people need to be more involved in school and local governance mechanisms. Administrative, budgeting and financing processes often create obstacles for the most marginalized children and coordination across sectors needs strengthening. This session aims to create an exchange between countries and between countries and experts about strategies that have proven effective in strengthening these key administrative systems.

*Chairperson: Mr. Jan van Ravens, Yale University, Child Study Center*

**Panel Discussion:** Enhancing education financing and improving cross-sectoral collaboration to promote equity

**Key Note Address – Education financing for equity**  
Mr. Jan Herczynski, Senior Research and Advisor to the Polish Ministry of National Education, Institute of Education Research, Warsaw.
There is a serious shortage of pre-primary school services and facilities in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The services that do exist are largely based in urban settings and are private in nature, making them inaccessible to the poorest, most marginalized children that would benefit most. Additionally, the quality of preschool services is of concern in the region, as little information is available on the effectiveness of teaching-learning processes in pre-primary school services, which often are unregulated by the state. This session will invite national and international technical experts in early childhood education to share their experience and successes in expanding access to early education services and in improving quality.
Education is ultimately judged by the learning outcomes that students take away from school. Learning outcomes determine the skills, competencies, values and knowledge that young people will carry into the labour market, society and their future families. In Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, as elsewhere in the world, many students leave school without the basic skills and knowledge needed to engage productively in their countries’ workforce and society. This serious inefficiency results from a lack of quality standards, from a lack of monitoring of learning outcomes and from poor quality teaching-learning processes that detract from the very purpose of education. This session aims to create an exchange between countries and between countries and experts about strategies that have proven successful for improving learning outcomes, with particular focus on the most marginalized children. It focuses particularly on making teaching-learning processes more inclusive and of better quality through standards, monitoring of learning and investment in teachers.
10.30–11.30  **Session 11.2:** Reforming teacher recruitment and qualifications systems

*Chairperson: Ms. Kate Lapham, Senior Program Manager, Education Support Program, Open Society Foundations*

**Teacher quality in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia**
Ms. Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Professor, Teachers College, Columbia University

**Active learning and standards of quality basic education**
Mr. Emin Amrullayev, Head of Education Quality Section, Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan

**Improving teacher quality in Uzbekistan**
Mr. Fayzulla Akhmedov, Head of Main Department for Organization of the Activities of Educational Institutions, Ministry of Public Education, Uzbekistan

**Education standards for the 21st Century**
Ms. Liana Ghent, Executive Director, International Step by Step Association

**Discussion**

11.30–12.30  **Session 11.3:** Making education staff and services more inclusive for learners

*Chairperson: Ms. Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Professor, Teachers College, Columbia University*

**Key Note Address – Closing policy gaps: policy strategies to support inclusive education for children with disabilities**
Ms. Kate Lapham, Senior Program Manager, Education Support Program, Open Society Foundations

**Video**
It’s About Ability Campaign, Montenegro

**Inclusive schools for inclusive education and care for children with disabilities – the Bulgarian experience**
Ms. Mukkades Nalbant, Deputy Minister of Education, Bulgaria

**Ending school segregation**
Ms. Galina Bulat, Inclusive Education Project Manager, Lumos

**Inclusive schools for inclusive learning**
Ms. Natasha Graham, International Disability Expert, Partnership for Child Development

**Inclusive learning for children with disabilities**
Ms. Denise Roza, Executive Director, Perspektiva

**Discussion**

12.30–13.00  **SESSION 12: CLOSING REMARKS**

- Ms. Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
- Mr. Yusuf Ziya Yediyildiz, Director General of European Union and Foreign Relations, Ministry of National Education, Turkey
- “Video presentation – Education Equity Now!”

13.00–14.00  **LUNCH**