

## [Speaker Presentation]

### “Governance for Quality Education and Roles of International Cooperation”

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Indeed it is a challenge to be part of the last panel in the day; but that positioning does have its benefits. One benefit is that we can link to the earlier presentations. Mr. Chairman, you have highlighted Prof. Seddoh’s list of problems and his view that they are all priorities. We can also learn from other aspects from his presentation, and link back to them in this panel.

As you remark, my role in IIEP is to look internationally, identifying experiences and lessons that can benefit UNESCO Member States as they make their own decisions. UNESCO presents its work in many documents, websites and other formats. Some of you are acquainted with the *Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report*. The 2009 version is specifically about governance,<sup>1</sup> and addresses links to the quality of education which are especially pertinent to this Forum.

Going through such a document, we may also ask ourselves how the messages in this 2009 Forum are similar to or different from the messages in 2008 or in related events of previous decades. To some extent, as we heard from Prof. Seddoh, the long list of problems is ongoing. But we are making progress in many domains, some of which are highlighted in the Global Monitoring Report. In 2008, Mamadou Ndoye of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) was one of the key speakers in the JEF V. The report of that event quotes him as referring to the danger of “Afro-pessimism”. Fortunately we also have Afro-optimists who can point to significant progress.

I suppose that in the 2008 JEF, no participants predicted the financial crisis in which we now find ourselves. In this respect, the context for the 2009 Forum is very different from that of the 2008 Forum. This changed context requires us to consider our responses. A room full of educators is likely to say that education is a fundamental investment which should be protected in a time of financial crisis. This is a valid message which indeed needs to be disseminated - and the message must reach beyond the circle of educators to the Ministries of Economic Development and elsewhere. Especially important is the need to protect basic education, which is the foundation of all higher levels. A message that I have heard today is that both equity and quality of education require focus and priority.

Taking a longer time-span and asking how our work has changed over the last few decades, one major contemporary issue which was not previously so pressing is corruption. In this domain IIEP has conducted significant work which highlights both the scale of the problem and some remedial actions.<sup>2</sup> To some extent, ambiguities and complexities are growing. The 2009 *EFA Global Monitoring Report* focuses on inequalities, and Prof. Seddoh highlighted the role of the public sector in underpinning equity and serving the needs of ordinary citizens. As he remarked, the vast majority of pupils depend on public education. The private sector of education has grown significantly during the last few decades, and there is a danger that rich families will increasingly abandon the public sector in favor of private schools.

Another domain needing careful scrutiny is the balance of centralization and decentralization. This morning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative in the Forum referred to the desirability of decentralizing at high speed.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO (2008): *Overcoming Inequality: Why Governance Matters. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009*. Paris: UNESCO.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Hallak, Jacques & Poisson, Muriel (eds.) (2006): *Governance in Education: Transparency and Accountability Matter*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP); Hallak, Jacques and Poisson, Muriel (2007): *Corrupt Schools, Corrupt Universities: What can be Done?*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).

Perhaps some caution is needed, because in some settings decentralization can lead to exacerbation of inequalities, diminishing system-wide effectiveness, and expansion of opportunities for petty corruption. All administrative mechanisms should be based on a clear understanding of the role of the state, which in many parts of the world needs strengthening. The present financial crisis has exposed weaknesses in the self-regulating mechanisms of parts of the private sector. The irony is that the challenges for the private sector which have contributed to economic collapse are also bringing challenges for the public sector. Governments find themselves devoting resources to holding up the banks and other private enterprises rather than strengthening the public sector, and have to do it with a weakened base of taxation revenue. Internationally, the crisis brings the threat of reduced aid flows to the public sectors of low-income countries. We are therefore in an era in which education systems operated by the state need to be strengthened at both centralized and decentralized levels, but in which the resources to achieve these goals may be more difficult to secure.

These themes are among the focuses of the work of IIEP. Our principal role is to work with governments in UNESCO Member States to support their operation. This includes examination of the implications of market operations alongside and in conjunction with state-run school systems. One specific focus of IIEP work is the extent to which private tutoring is growing alongside public schooling for economic and other reasons.<sup>3</sup> Japan has a long tradition of what may be called shadow education in its *juku*, and other various forms of shadow education are becoming increasingly evident in other parts of the world. Private tutoring can have positive features, but it also has many negative ones. It is especially problematic when teachers in the public system deliberately withhold aspects of the curriculum in order to expand demand for their services in the private market. This creates contradictions in which on the one hand governments organize fee-free education in the public sector but alongside it grows a parallel fee-paying system. The growth of this shadow system has major implications for governance, equity and quality.

In summary, governance is indeed a very important topic in which we can learn a lot from each other. The issues are complicated - if they were simple, we would not need Forums like this to discuss them. But one of the major benefits of international cooperation is the possibility to learn from experiences in different parts of the world. I am most appreciative of our Japanese hosts for facilitating this event, and I look forward to hearing from the other two panelists and then to our discussion.

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Bray, Mark (1999): *The Shadow Education System: Private Tutoring and its Implications for Planners*. Paris: UNESCO-IIEP; Bray, Mark (2009): *Confronting the Shadow Education System: What Government Policies for What Private Tutoring?* Paris: UNESCO-IIEP.