

BUENOS AIRES DECLARATION

The Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean, convened by UNESCO for the Second Intergovernmental Meeting of the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in the city of Buenos Aires on March 29 and 30, 2007, ratify the need to strengthen efforts to achieve a quality education for all, understanding education as a public good and fundamental human right, and as the responsibility of society as a whole.

The countries of the region have made great efforts to eradicate illiteracy, increase the number of compulsory schooling years, extend coverage at all levels of the educational system, improve infrastructure and children's health and nutrition, design new curricula, strengthen the professional formation of teachers, and improve educational information, assessment and management systems.

Despite the efforts made, there still remain social sectors in situations of inequality regarding educational access, continuation of studies, and learning achievements. This inequity is inconsistent with the construction of fair societies that are capable of including all within a framework of sustainable and sustained economic and social growth.

Base upon the above, reports, and the debates held during this meeting,

We declare:

1. That the main challenge of the region is to ensure the right of all to a quality lifelong education that is relevant, pertinent and equitable, through effective and efficient public action. This right is an ethical option that determines our future and is based on the principle of equal opportunity and the right to non-discrimination as are stated in the Convention against Discrimination in Education.
2. That we commit ourselves to ensuring that the State act as guarantor and regulator of the right to a quality education for all, by promoting national consensus on education, formulating long-term education policies with social participation, assuring an educational offering that is pluralistic and democratic, and improving the quality of public school education, given the role it plays in reducing inequities and strengthening social cohesion.
3. That it is urgent to advance towards more inclusive schools and education systems, formulating strategies that address contribute towards breaking the cycle of poverty and social exclusion. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop intersectoral policies to address that which generates inequality in and outside of education systems.

4. That it is necessary to increase financial resources destined for education, and to allocate and manage them according to criteria of efficacy, efficiency, equity and transparency. We therefore recognize the importance of promoting national agreements that favour sustained increase in educational financing in the medium and long terms. We likewise call for this public financing effort to be accompanied by international efforts, such as programs based on debt-for- education swaps in countries that find them convenient.
5. That it is priority to invest more in teachers to improve the quality of education, attracting young talent, improving work conditions and promoting teaching careers that increase professional efficacy and responsibility for learning results. Similarly, comprehensive policies that connect initial training –that prepares teachers to work in different contexts-, labour insertion, ongoing training, performance evaluation, systems of incentives and payment, and mechanisms to encourage teacher participation, must be guaranteed.
6. That it is necessary to reinforce lateral cooperation among the countries of the region to strengthen processes of integration and advance towards a common agenda to fulfill these commitments and achieve the goals of Education for All.
7. That we, the Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean appreciate UNESCO's having convened this meeting, and express our support of its work in coordinating and following-up on PRELAC. We request that the organization continue to develop and reinforce its role as the catalyst for cooperation among the countries of the region in order to make effective the right of a quality education for all.
8. That we commit ourselves to work intensely in order to fulfill, considering national specificities, the proposals and recommendations that accompany the present declaration, which are the result of the discussions held by the Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean in the debate sessions of this meeting.

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30 March 2007