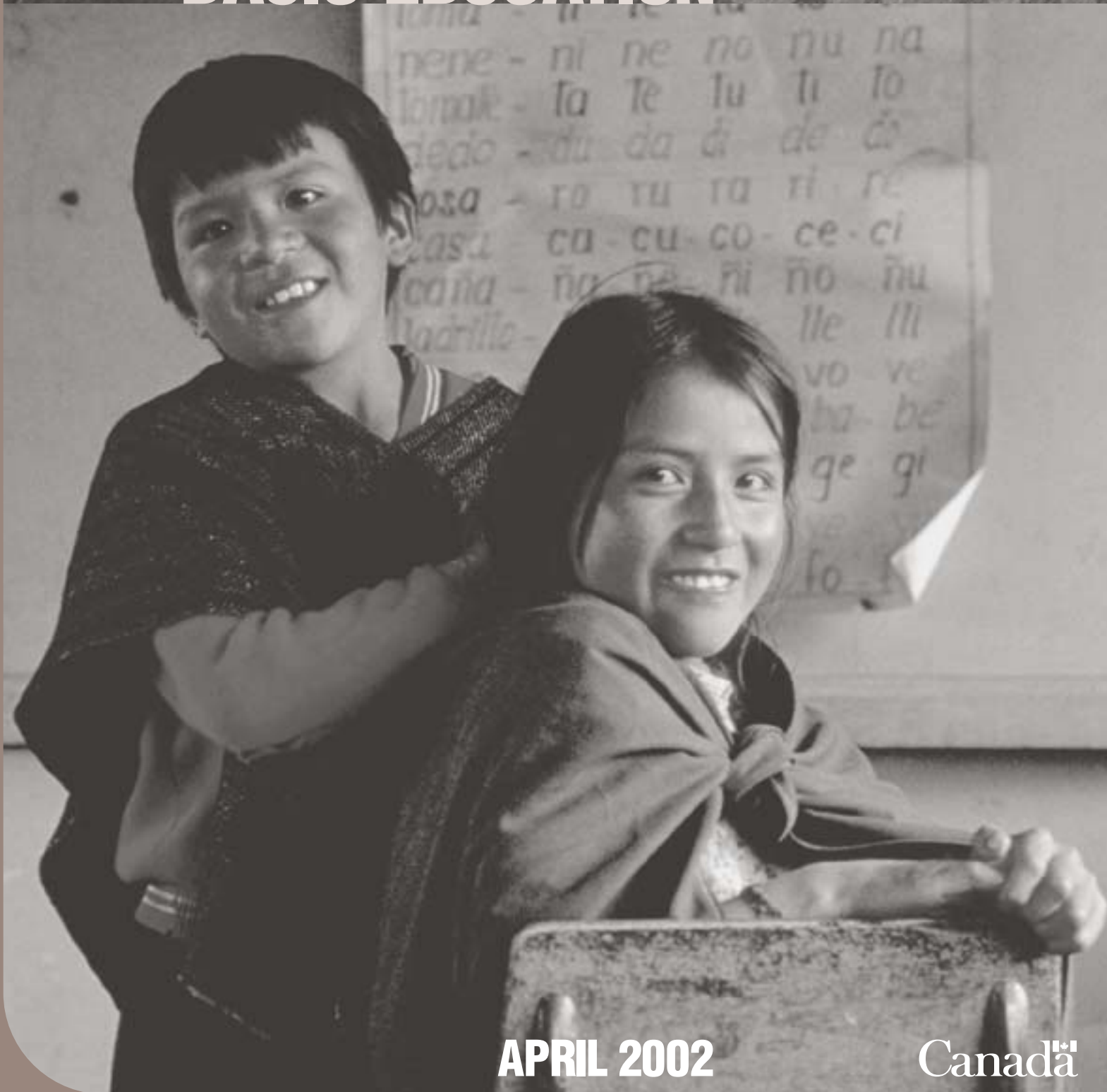# CIDA's ACTION PLAN ON BASIC EDUCATION

CIDA

APRIL 2002

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**CIDA's
ACTION PLAN ON
BASIC EDUCATION**

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Schoolchildren at Lesiraa Primary School in Arusha, Tanzania, display traditional costumes for Minister Whelan.

Years of experience have shown that, over time, education is the key to closing the door on ignorance, poverty, and suffering, and opening a new door to peace, prosperity, and better health around the world.

Yet even today millions of children—the majority of them girls—do not have an opportunity to go to school. At the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, the international community, including Canada, made a commitment to achieve quality universal primary education for all by 2015.

As Minister responsible for the Canadian International Development Agency, I will ensure that Canada contributes its share to achieve this goal, both through this Action Plan and by leading international efforts, such as through the G-8.

Meeting our objective will advance CIDA's own sustainable development goals, including its four interrelated social development priorities of basic education, health and nutrition, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and child protection.

The challenge is immense, and time is of the essence if we are to meet our goal. This is why CIDA will quadruple its investment in basic education, for a total expenditure of $555 million for the period 2000–2005. CIDA's Basic Education Action Plan is a framework for action. It focuses on three critical goals:

- ensuring access to free and compulsory primary education for all by 2015;
- eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education; and,
- improving the quality of basic education for all learners.

As our developing-country partners increasingly make education a priority in their development, Canada is committed to supporting them in their efforts to ensure Education for All.

Susan Whelan
Minister for International Cooperation

"...all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be."

World Education Forum, April 2000,
Dakar, Senegal

Guiding Principles

• Education is a human right.

• Basic education is an essential element of sustainable development and poverty reduction.

• Gender equality is a prerequisite to achieving education for all.

• The quality of education is paramount.

• Relevance, quality, and ownership of basic education rest upon a foundation of partnership between central authorities and local communities.

• Education fosters democracy, equality, justice, dignity, and respect for human rights.

CIDA's goals in basic education

With its partners in developing countries, countries in transition, the Canadian education community, and other bilateral and multilateral partners in development, CIDA will work toward the following goals:

• All children will have access to and will complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015. Our efforts will include a special emphasis on those who are often marginalized, including girls, the poorest, indigenous peoples, those from minority groups, working children, children in conflict areas, children living in remote regions, and children with special needs and disabilities.

• Progress toward gender equality, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality, will be supported by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by the year 2005.

• The quality of basic education will be improved, as reflected in recognized and measurable learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy, and life skills for learners of all age groups.

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Introduction

Education is one of the most effective tools societies have to enable people to share fully in the benefits of sustainable economic and social development. CIDA's policy framework for Official Development Assistance identifies education as a basic human need. It is one of the main indicators of human well-being, along with primary health care, family planning, nutrition, water and sanitation, and shelter. Education is also recognized internationally as a human right that all people possess, regardless of gender, race, age, socio-economic status, disability, or geographic location. As both a basic need and a human right, education is fundamental to any effective program that aims to build a better quality of life for the poorest and most marginalized people in the world.

In April 2000, delegates from 150 countries came together in Dakar, Senegal. There, they made a commitment to the achievement of education for all, for every citizen and every society. The challenge that they set was clear:

"We re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990), supported by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an edu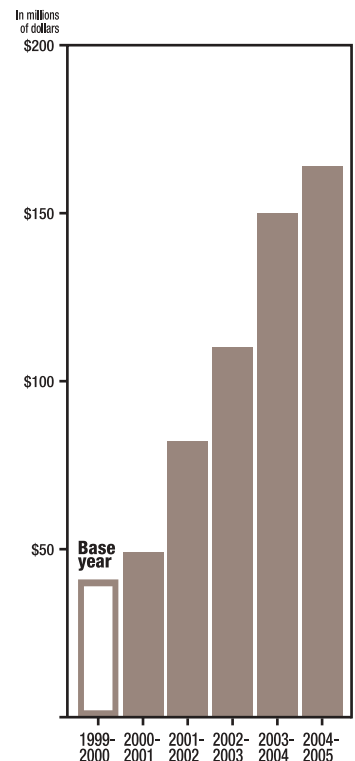cation that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies."

Canada is committed to supporting the global initiative of Education for All, and recognizes that, if the world does not make progress toward Education for All, national and internationally agreed targets for poverty reduction will be missed, and inequalities between countries and within societies will widen.

CIDA believes that education is key to poverty reduction, to sustainable development, and to peace and stability within and among countries. Basic education is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are all affected by rapid globalization. It opens up access to knowledge and skills and breaks down the barriers that prevent marginalized people from full participation in the economic and political life of their country.

This document is intended as a framework for action. The following section provides a definition of basic education in the context of CIDA's Social Development Priorities.

Between 2000 and 2005 CIDA will **quadruple** its investment in basic education, for a total expenditure of $555 million in that period.

In millions of dollars

$200	
$150	
$100	
$50	Base year
	1999-2000 2000-2001 2001-2002 2002-2003 2003-2004 2004-2005

Basic education and CIDA's Social Development Priorities

How does CIDA define basic education?

CIDA acknowledges that education is a lifelong process that begins in early childhood and carries on throughout the life of each individual citizen. CIDA's *Action Plan on Basic Education* encompasses both the formal public education systems that governments provide, as well as non-formal schooling that non-governmental organizations and institutions offer. The Plan focuses on universal primary education, as well as on adult basic education and literacy. Programs in early childhood education are included when they are designed to be part of an integrated strategy to improve access, equality, quality, and the eventual success of learners in basic education. Basic education involves literacy, numeracy,

and life skills. Life skills—such as decision-making, problem solving, critical thinking, and effective communication—enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills enable people to continue learning and adapting throughout their lives, to act as responsible citizens, to understand their rights, to maximize livelihood opportunities, to work collaboratively, and to maintain their health and the health of their families. At the same time, life skills also give people the confidence and self-esteem to act on their knowledge.

Basic education: A definition

In 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the international community approved the *World Declaration on Education for All,* which provides the following definition for basic learning needs:

"...both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time."

– Article 1

Why is basic education critical?

Basic education is key to improving the quality of life of the individual, in facilitating the fulfilment of his or her rights, and in contributing to human, social, and economic development. It gives the highest rate of return on any social investment. Education contributes to improving people's lives and reducing poverty. It does so through multiple pathways, including:

- **Family health:** Education, particularly of girls and women, has a direct impact on family health. It contributes to a better understanding of choices for reproduction and the realization of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, and it substantially reduces child mortality rates.

- **Personal development:** Education enriches the lives of individuals, both through heightened awareness and the pleasure of knowledge, and through the empowerment, dignity, and sense of self-worth that accompany education.

- **Social development:** Education strengthens social cohesion and good citizenship. It gives people better opportunities for participation, empowerment, and equity. Children who are educated have a much greater chance of becoming responsible adults who promote the economic and social development of their communities and who are committed to the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, and social justice.

- **Human-capacity development:** Every extra year of basic education strengthens a person's skills and abilities, which in turn increases his or her productivity and earning power, with the greatest proportional gains occurring as a result of primary education.

Basic education increases the value of all other development investments. Strengthening basic education—both in terms of access, equality, and quality—is essential if poverty reduction, sustainable development, and the fulfilment of human rights are to be achieved.

How does basic education fit with CIDA's other Social Development Priorities?

Canada's Official Development Assistance program supports sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable, and prosperous world. *CIDA's Social Development Priorities: A Framework for Action* focuses on four closely linked areas that lie at the heart of poverty reduction and sustainable development: basic education, health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and child protection. CIDA's approach to basic education will build on these links and use them for greater impact whenever possible.

Basic education and HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is having a devastating effect on education. More than 10 million children in Africa alone are AIDS orphans; many of them have had to drop out of school. Millions more, most of them girls, have left school to care for sick relatives. Others must work to supplement lost family income. Trained teachers, always a scarce resource, are dying and not being replaced. UNICEF estimates that 800,000 children in South Africa alone lost their teachers to AIDS in 1999.

Basic education, however, is a key strategy in dealing with the pandemic. In Uganda, aggressive education campaigns to champion safe sexual practices, focusing particularly on younger children, have paid off in sharply reduced infection rates. The education of girls is particularly important, given their higher rates of infection. Education gives them the confidence and knowledge they need to make responsible decisions about their sexual behaviour and to resist coercion. In addition, schools can play an important role in combatting prejudice and discrimination directed at those living with AIDS.

Basic education and child protection

Many of the poorest and most disadvantaged of the world's children—child soldiers, refugees, AIDS orphans, street children, girls in brothels, and young workers in sweatshops, factories, homes, and fields— do not have the opportunity to attend school and to participate in the decisions that may affect their lives. Working children often cannot attend school during regular hours because of a need to work either inside or outside of the home. Providing access to meaningful, quality basic education that eliminates barriers to participation is a way to break cycles of poverty and protect children from exploitation.

Basic education can also play an important role in protecting children affected by conflict. When basic education is of good quality, it is a powerful form of child protection, because it provides children with opportunities to make choices, to participate, and to contribute. Starting at the primary level, schools can promote values of peace, tolerance, respect for human rights, and conflict resolution within their life-skills programs.

Basic education and health and nutrition

Educated people are more aware of their right to the highest attainable standard of health, and are more likely to seek medical help and to follow the advice of medical practitioners. They also tend to be more receptive to

public education programs on health and nutrition. Numerous studies have confirmed that women with more education have their first sexual experiences later, marry later, want smaller families, and are more likely to use contraception and engage in safe sexual practices than less-educated women. They understand more fully the benefits of good nutrition, sanitation, and immunization for themselves and for their children.

Healthy, well-nourished children are better learners. They attend school more regularly, and they accomplish more while in school. Immunization programs can be mounted effectively through schools, and in turn make schools healthier environments for children.

Basic education, gender equality, and human rights

Gender equality and human rights are an integral part of each of CIDA's four priority areas. Reaching the goal of universal access to quality basic education will require interventions that also promote gender equality and the realization of human rights. This means that at every step of the process, it is important to apply a gender equality and human rights lens, and to recognize that progress will be limited if these two key elements are not considered.
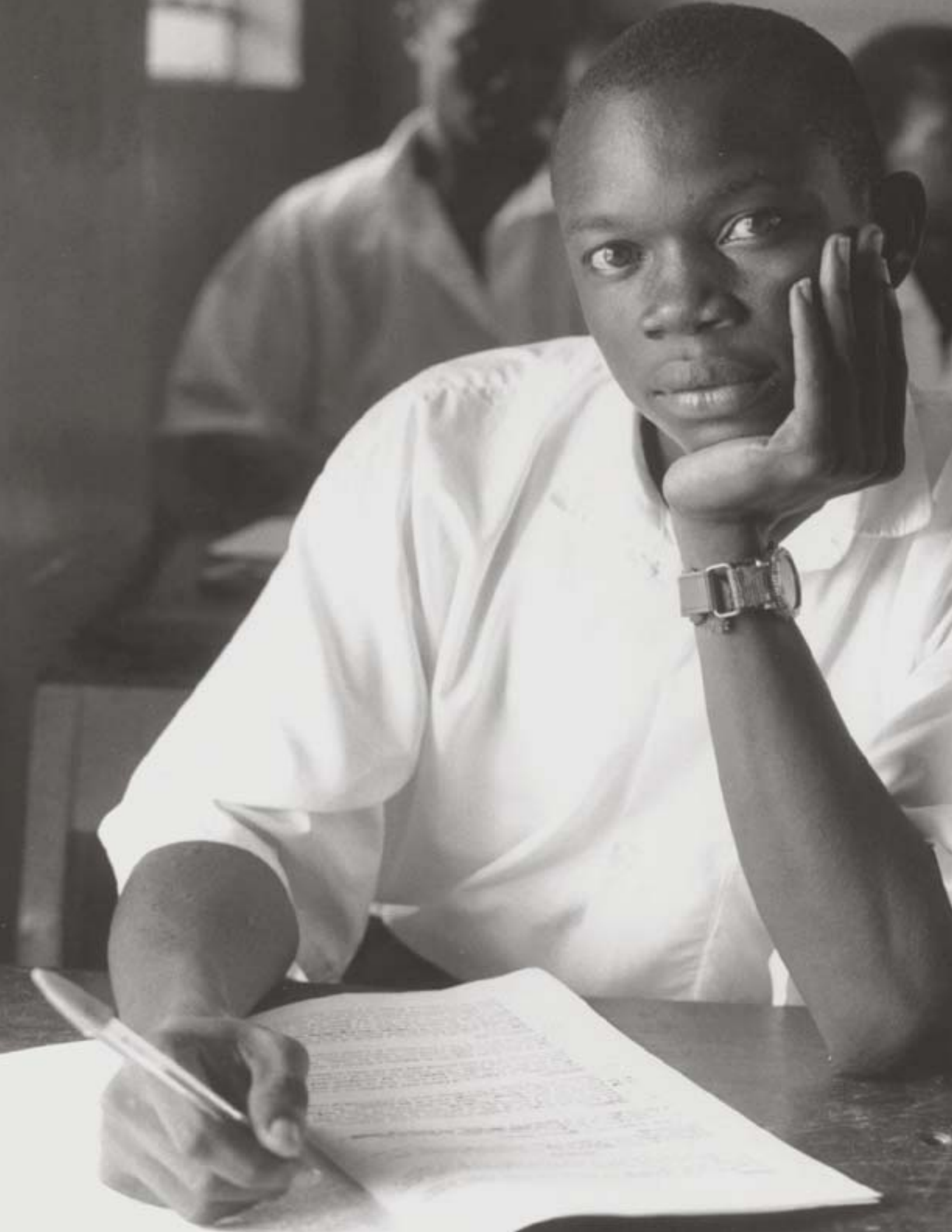
Education in a changing world

The impact of global changes on education

The past decade was filled with unprecedented global changes that have contributed to an increase in the number of out-of-school children and have made the achievement of goals and objectives of international agreements such as the World Declaration on Education for All even more challenging.

- **Rapid population growth** in some regions has outpaced growth in enrolment. This challenge has been most acute in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the increase in the absolute number of children enrolled, sub-Saharan Africa has had falling enrolment rates. The proportion of 6- to 11-year-olds enrolled in school has declined from 59 percent in 1980 to 51 percent in 1992. Continued population growth in this area means that the out-of-school population of that age group has risen from 39 million to 56 million through the 1990s (World Bank 1999).

- In the past decade, **conflict and war** have affected more than 30 countries in the world. Children have often been the first casualties of conflict: families are uprooted, while boys and girls are co-opted as child soldiers or sex slaves. For all children of war, the quality of education is dramatically undermined. At the very least, attendance rates have dropped and academic performance has suffered. Education systems and schools in these countries have been seriously damaged.

The education environment must be rebuilt; schools must become safe havens for students and teachers. Schools can help learners in war-torn countries learn about human rights, tolerance, peace, and conflict resolution.

- **Natural disasters** have eroded the gains made in some of the world's poorest countries. Schools and educational institutions have been destroyed. Costs to rebuild are often beyond the capacities of the state and civil society, keeping even more children out of school.

- **The information revolution and globalization** have changed labour-force requirements. Knowledge and information have become critical determinants of competitiveness in today's world, and basic education is fundamental to the creation and use of knowledge. Without that basis, and the necessary skills and technical know-how for every citizen, developing countries risk being left behind in the knowledge and information revolution.

The challenges in education for developing countries

Global trends have had an impact on education systems and their governance, on the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn and, ultimately, on the fulfilment of the goals and objectives of Education for All. Within this context, three particularly important and interdependent factors must be emphasized:

• **Access:** The vast number of children out of school do not attend because of poverty, social marginalization, cultural practices, and, in some cases, because of inefficient or inequitable provision of services within educational systems. In some areas, the costs of items such as school texts and uniforms make access difficult for children living in poverty. Girls and women may not receive an education because the perceived value of educating females may be low.

Marginalized people often experience exploitation, abuse, and discrimination. Special efforts must be made to ensure that working children, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and those with special needs receive an education. Domestic chores, caring for siblings or ill family members, puberty rites, marriage preparation, high dowries, and little promise of future income recovery are all factors that work against parents' natural inclination to educate their daughters. Unfriendly school environments—including poorly trained teachers and unsafe and unsanitary schools—further discourage girls' attendance. Pregnancy, poor health, and the risks of walking long distances cause high rates of absenteeism and missed learning, and eventually cause many girls to drop out of school.

• **Quality:** Quality of education is currently a focus for reform in both developing and industrialized countries throughout the world. When the quality of education comes into question, it can be due to one or more of many factors: teaching and learning materials that are insufficient, unavailable, or irrelevant; rote learning that emphasizes a narrow view of examination performance rather than relevant learning outcomes; overcrowded classrooms; schools that are improperly furnished or that have unsafe, unhealthy, and unfriendly environments;

traditional programs designed to educate a narrow elite; teachers and principals who are inadequately trained and poorly compensated; and weak governance, performance, and management within education systems. The quality of education must not be compromised because of inappropriate or biased curricula, cultural insensitivity, or language of instruction.

- **Financial resources:** Insufficient financial resources are often cited as a root cause for the poor quality of education. Sustaining quality education requires that countries focus on the most effective use of existing resources. In some countries, already inadequate education expenditure may be skewed toward the upper-grade levels, where participation is low and includes only students from higher-income groups. In establishing priorities between spending on different levels of education, consideration should be given to the distribution of benefits across the population. Political commitment and institutional capacity within governments will be essential for the development and implementation of education strategies that focus on the poor.

An international commitment to education

The first Education for All conference was held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand. The conference set the stage for further expressions of support and review, which culminated at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000. Other UN-led conferences throughout the 1990s that included components on basic education were: the World Summit for Children (1990); the Conference on the Environment and Development (1992); the World Conference on Human Rights (1993); the International Conference on Population and Development (1994); the World Summit for Social Development (1995); and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995).

These conferences led the members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to adopt international development goals on poverty reduction and sustainable development, including goals on basic education. The conferences also identified the linkages between many aspects of development, including gender equality, human rights, and areas covered by CIDA's four Social Development Priorities. The international community has responded to these goals and linkages through action in the multilateral development system and in direct bilateral programming.

In April 2000, a Canadian delegation participated in the World Education Forum in Dakar. This allowed CIDA to reaffirm Canada's support to the internationally agreed-upon education targets, and to demonstrate CIDA's commitment to basic education, with a particular emphasis on closing the gender gap. Speaking on behalf of 11 bilateral donors at the closing ceremony, CIDA stressed that the community of donors was united behind the targets, and was prepared to support those governments committed to universal primary education and gender equality.

The scale of the Education for All challenge is indeed daunting. Developing countries, in partnership with Canada, other donor nations, and members of civil society, will need to act boldly, creatively, and strategically if the agreed-upon goals are to be achieved. The active participation of a broad coalition of educational stakeholders in common efforts is essential—at all levels of society and in all sectors of government. Stakeholders, including children, teachers, parents, principals, communities, educational officials, and civil society organizations should all contribute to the decisions that will build and strengthen education.

A report card on Education for All

In 1990, at Jomtien, 155 governments committed to "meeting the basic learning needs of all." The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is almost universally ratified, showing an overwhelming consensus to make the right to education a reality. Yet a decade later, despite the best efforts of individual countries and the international community, and despite marked progress in some areas, huge challenges remain:

- Each year, more than 130 million primary-school-aged children are denied access to education—two-thirds of them are girls (UNICEF 1999).

- More than 150 million children start primary school but drop out before they have completed five years of education (UNICEF 1999).

- It is estimated that one in five individuals in the developing world will still be illiterate in 2010 (UNESCO 1997).

- Less than two percent of children with disabilities in developing countries are included in formal education (Watkins 2000).

- It is estimated that 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 in the developing world are working. Three-quarters of them work six days per week or more, and one-half work nine hours per day or more (UNICEF 1997).

Access to education, however, involves more than just enrolling children in school. Providing equal access to high-quality, inclusive, unbiased, relevant, and learner-centred education that motivates students to stay in school is emerging as a major challenge in virtually every country.

The challenges in education from a regional perspective

Africa and the Middle East

This region faces severe development challenges. Some countries in this region have the highest global rates of poverty, crippling national debt, and rapid, unsustainable population growth. They have the highest rates of HIV/AIDS and continue to depend heavily on aid. Conflict is widespread throughout the region.

Access to education remains a problem; over 56 million children in sub-Saharan Africa alone are out of school (UNICEF 1998). In the Middle East and North Africa, nearly 5 million children from ages 6 to 10, and nearly 4 million children from ages 11 to 15, region-wide, were out of school in 1995. By 2015 these numbers are expected to grow by 40 percent to 7.5 million and 5.6 million respectively. A disproportionate number of these children are poor, rural children, and girls (World Bank 1998).

A significant number of children in all areas of Africa repeat grades and drop out due to poverty, HIV/AIDS, and gender discrimination.

Although gender gaps have decreased in some countries, disparities remain. Classrooms may be overcrowded, and teachers often need additional training. Curriculum and learning materials may be outdated and irrelevant to learners. All of these conditions have contributed to low retention and completion rates. Many countries are attempting to strengthen planning and management of their education systems, but are struggling because of a lack of resources and a need to improve their institutional capacity.

Asia

The countries of Asia contain half the world's poor, three-quarters of whom are women. Fertility rates have dropped in some areas, but are still high in South Asia. The rising level of inequality between rich and poor presents key challenges to educators. The countries of East and Southeast Asia are benefiting from the emphasis they put on basic education a generation ago. In South Asia, these investments have not been made, and more than 50 million children are still not in school. Enrolment rates are markedly lower in rural areas, and the gender gap in primary enrolment has exceeded 15 percent. Over 40 percent of primary-school students drop out before reaching fifth grade. Throughout Asia, there are pockets of children who are not attending school, and girls make up the majority of them (Haq 1998).

Reports from Asia indicate that quality is still an issue in many countries; rote learning is still the norm, and life-skills instruction is weak. The education community in Asia has identified a need for more investment in teacher training and learning materials, improvements in educational management, and greater community participation in the education systems. In addition, as many Asian countries join the global marketplace, they are eager to address the need for improved skill levels in information technology.

Central and Eastern Europe

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are concerned about marked declines in enrolment and the quality of education during their transition from centrally planned to market economies. At least one child in seven of primary school age is out of school in Croatia, Georgia, Latvia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In countries of the former

Soviet Union, 32,000 preschools closed between 1991 and 1995 with big declines in enrolment in Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. While there is gender parity in primary enrolment, girls' enrolment is higher than boys' at the secondary level in some countries (UNICEF 1999).

Real public spending on education has fallen in many countries—by one-third in the Russian Federation, and by three-quarters or more in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan. Teachers' salaries have seriously declined in a number of countries, and education costs for families have increased, a constraint for poor and minority families (UNICEF 1999). In addition, conflict has eroded access and quality in many countries of the region.

Latin America and the Caribbean
The Latin America and Caribbean region has higher enrolment rates than any other region in the developing world at the pre-primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Overall, girls' and boys' enrolment in primary school is on a par, and girls' secondary enrolment (51 percent) tops boys' enrolment (47 percent). Developing countries have identified the quality of education provided in most of the region—as well as the social and economic circumstances of many students—as the cause of unacceptably high drop-out rates. The result is that about half of the students in Latin America do not attain basic literacy—even after six years of schooling. This region has large economic disparities between rich and poor, and indigenous populations face unique difficulties in access to quality education (UNICEF 1999).

Education for All:
Some key findings

The Education for All 2000 Assessment, conducted in preparation for the Dakar Forum, was a rich source of data and of lessons learned. Analysis of the assessment data resulted in the following findings:

- **Primary education has not been accessible to all.** The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* state that primary education should be compulsory and free to all. Many countries are reviewing and reforming education financing to produce a more equitable and sustainable sharing of resources. Countries are also working to remove obstacles such as inadequate infrastructure for people with disabilities and the availability of learning materials in mother-tongue languages. CIDA fully supports the need for diverse, alternative, flexible, and reasonably priced education programs such as the non-formal education programs of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee.

- **Gender equality in education will require systemic approaches and proactive measures.** Girls' education is an important entry point to begin tackling gender inequality. All aspects of the education process—the physical environment, teacher training, curriculum, and assessment—must be analyzed through a gender lens if equality is to be achieved.

In some countries, affirmative action may also be needed. CIDA's leadership initiative in girls' education is well-recognized and provides a solid base for future programming. In some Caribbean countries, boys are lagging behind girls, especially at the secondary level, and increasing attention is being paid to this issue. In all countries, improvements in education targeting girls have also benefited boys.

- **The quality of education is vital**, and must not be neglected as access is expanded. Strengthening the quality of teacher education is one of the most important interventions an educational system can make to improve the quality of teaching and learning. CIDA supports teacher education in Guyana, Malawi, Kosovo, and South Africa.

- **Strong commitment by developing-country governments and institutions is essential** to achieving universal primary education. CIDA has substantially increased its support to basic education in some of the poorest countries in the world, such as Senegal, Mali, and Guyana. This support has been effective because of the strong commitment to meaningful education reform on the part of the host governments, their ministries of education, and the educators of the countries involved.

- **The impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on education has been far greater than previously imagined.** In many countries, understanding the scope of the challenge HIV/AIDS has presented to education systems has been difficult, and during the past two decades reaction has been hesitant and largely ineffective. However, recently there have been encouraging signs of increased commitment to fight this disease and to deal with its impact on education systems. Successful educational programs such as those in Uganda have reduced national infection rates and contributed to a regional downturn in those rates. The formal education system can play an important role in public awareness. Non-formal education programs can address the needs of children and young people who are not in school. An effective response to HIV/AIDS will require new and strengthened partnerships between education and other sectors to deal with prevention and intervention initiatives, and to counter the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on the education system.

- **Sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) are a promising programming tool.** SWAPs begin with a comprehensive country-led strategic analysis and plan, which is then implemented with coordinated support from donors, national governments, NGOs, and local community stakeholders. SWAPs multiply the benefits of donor investments and encourage host-country ownership and commitment. A high level of political commitment within and beyond the sector, transparency, accountability, and good governance are critical for success. CIDA has recently joined other donors in supporting Uganda's Education Strategic Investment Plan, which is an example of a highly successful SWAP.

- **Information and communications technologies must be used strategically and cost-effectively.** Information and communications technologies (ICTs) can reduce the isolation of teachers and students in remote areas, and can provide new and exciting learning tools for unlocking students' creativity. ICTs can also open new avenues for improving educational management and administration through better data collection and analysis, and the use of educational management information systems to guide policy-

makers and planners. However, the rapid pace of technological change and the high initial cost of investing in new technologies call for an approach that is demand-driven, rather than supply-dominated.

- **Decentralization of education is critical.** Increasing involvement of local communities in the education of their children is one of the most promising strategies for mobilizing new resources and improving the quality and relevance of education. Citizens want to participate in and influence the institutions that provide services for them. Community participation can result in decisions that meet local needs and respect the culture of the local community and family. The participation of different stakeholders is invaluable in educational policy development, planning, management, and financing at all levels of the education system, from the local school level to the national level. Governments are ultimately responsible for guaranteeing, protecting, and promoting education. They can meet this obligation by ensuring that decentralization of education does not increase inequities in the provision of educational resources.

- **Educational reform requires a long-term commitment.** Sustainable improvement in educational systems calls for long-term investments and long-term partnerships. This involves a complex and multi-layered range of institutional and individual partners and stakeholders at international, national, regional, and local levels, and in the public, private, and volunteer sectors. Sustainable and meaningful change takes time to work. The experience of Southeast Asia is a case in point; countries there are now reaping the benefits of the investments made in education over the last 20 years.

CIDA's future programming: Key focus areas

The following key focus areas reflect the lessons learned by the international community over the past decade. These focus areas, which will be driven primarily by the explicit needs of our partner countries, will seek to make the greatest impact within the available resources. They also reflect areas of Canadian expertise and experience, and will complement the activities of other donors.

Key focus areas

Education systems

Strengthening education systems is central to achieving education for all. CIDA will share Canada's expertise in learner-centred education approaches, teacher training, curriculum development, and improved assessment of learning outcomes, and will encourage the use of tools like distance education and information technology. These tools can be valuable for the training and professional development of teachers, principals, and administrators, and for improving access to education information and resources, most notably for rural and inaccessible areas. As part of strengthening education systems, CIDA will promote the development of alternative and innovative programs.

Girls' education

CIDA will build on its commitment to gender equality and on its strength in programming in girls' education. An accelerated effort on the part of national, international, and civil society partners will be needed if the international goals of equal access and achievement for girls are to be met by 2005. CIDA will focus on strategies that work to change the attitudes and practices that currently create barriers to full and equal participation of girls and women in education systems. These strategies will include programs to increase demand for and acceptance of education for girls and women, support for improved and inclusive literacy programs, increasing female participation in the education system at all levels, and initiatives that create safe educational environments.

Political will and public support

Developing countries are the leaders in ensuring access to quality basic education. CIDA recognizes that any country can only achieve universal, quality basic education if its people and government are fully committed politically, financially, and operationally. With other donors, CIDA will work to ensure that committed governments do not fail because of a lack of resources. Mechanisms such as debt relief, coordinated investment in sector-wide approaches, and other forms of aid will be used. CIDA will join with other countries and multilateral agencies at international conferences, summits, and discussions in their efforts to push for a global consensus on the centrality of education to economic and social development.

**Knowledge-sharing and building
on demonstrated results**
CIDA will improve its knowledge-sharing activities in
the area of education, learning from and informing our
partners to ensure that we use best practices and lessons
learned in programming to maximize the social return
on investment in education. We will work with our wide
spectrum of partners, including NGOs, universities and
colleges, and provincial and territorial ministries of
education, to research, further elaborate, and disseminate
the body of agreed principles, best practices, lessons
learned, and policy guidance for effective international
cooperation in meeting the international goals for
education. With developing countries, we will explore
alternative and innovative approaches to education.

Coordination, coherence, and collaboration
Increasingly, donor communities are moving away
from managing many individual projects and moving
toward influencing policy and making strategic
investments. CIDA will work to address the broad
policy and institutional environment within which
educational reform occurs. We will work to enhance
donor collaboration with the support of partner NGOs
and with direction and leadership from our developing-
country partners. All policies and programming in the
education sector should work together and reinforce
one another.

Strengthening the capacity of local stakeholders
CIDA has long had effective partnerships with non-
governmental organizations that work in education,
largely at the local level. But it is important to integrate
the efforts of local communities and NGOs within the
reforms led by governments in the formal education
system. CIDA's programming in education will support
initiatives in capacity-building for national, district, and
local partners in educational planning and administration.

Actions to achieve greater impact

VI

The following actions will be at the core of CIDA's efforts in education reform. These 10 actions support the goals of access, equality, and quality of education. Collectively, these actions will guide CIDA's support for developing countries as they implement the Dakar Framework for Action, *Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments*.

Improve access to quality education. CIDA will support improved access for children, adolescents, youth, and those with special needs and disabilities, while giving special attention to gender. This access may be provided through alternative, innovative, non-formal, community-based education. CIDA will support the facilitation of complementary activities in the area of early childhood education when these activities have been designed as part of an integrated strategic plan that has a direct impact on basic education.

Integrate strategies for gender equality. CIDA will work with developing countries to make the environment, content, and processes of education as safe, welcoming, and free of gender bias as possible, and to ensure that the educational needs of both boys and girls, men and women are met.

Improve the quality of classroom instruction. CIDA will support developing countries in their efforts to improve learning environments by strengthening instructional strategies, improving learning materials and curricula, and developing innovative non-formal approaches.

Enhance the training levels, professionalism, status, and morale of teachers, principals, and school administrators. CIDA will support programs to improve the training of education professionals at all levels of the education system, both in academic content and in pedagogy. Initial training should be followed by opportunities for in-service, professional development, and career progress, with policies to encourage retention of trained and experienced teachers, principals, and school administrators. CIDA will also support initiatives to improve the working conditions and status of teachers.

Strengthen HIV/AIDS programming. CIDA will work to implement and strengthen cross-sectoral education programs that address the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other key health and nutrition challenges. It will support efforts to monitor the impact of the pandemic on education, including the loss of qualified teachers, teacher educators, and officials. The overwhelming number of students who are ill, dying, impoverished, or orphaned will require responsive programming.

Support good educational governance and management. CIDA will support national governments in their efforts to facilitate the active participation of the broadest possible coalition of stakeholders in the reform and strengthening of quality basic education. These efforts may include measures to improve the accountability and transparency of educational management and administration, to decentralize education systems, and to empower local communities.

CIDA will work with developing countries to ensure that decentralization does not lead to inequities in the provision of educational resources. Decentralization can and should strengthen a national government's capacity to guarantee, protect, and promote the right to education.

Promote respect for human rights. CIDA will encourage and support educational programs that promote peace, tolerance, and mutual understanding, respect for human rights, inclusiveness, conflict resolution, and cross-cultural understanding. These programs must help to mitigate the effects of civil strife, ethnic hostilities, and violence on education.

Strengthen civil society. CIDA will work with national governments to strengthen the engagement of students, parents, communities, non-governmental organizations, unions, employers' groups, post-secondary institutions, and other civil-society representatives in education reform. This work will include support for the decentralization of educational management and the creation of new mechanisms for active participation, dialogue, consultation, and decision-making.

Promote the use of information and communications technologies. CIDA will enhance educational access, equality, quality, and innovation through needs-driven approaches based on the financial and human resource capacities of the recipient country. It will support efforts to use new technologies for instructional and management use by education professionals. These technologies should

be practical, sustainable, equitable, and affordable, and should increase opportunities for quality education. Special emphasis will be placed on learners located in rural and isolated areas.

Heighten cooperation and coordination. CIDA will promote and engage in mechanisms that aid cooperation and coordination through initiatives such as sector-wide approaches. CIDA will work within sustainable and well-integrated education-sector frameworks that are, whenever possible, clearly linked to poverty reduction and broader development strategies. CIDA will encourage links between education and other sectors, particularly health, nutrition, population, governance, human rights, and the environment, through support for programming within comprehensive development frameworks.

How do we measure progress?

Improvements in education systems and in the achievement of education for all will take time, and measuring progress toward the stated goals of Education for All will be multi-level and multi-dimensional. Nevertheless, CIDA is committed to the establishment and systematic measurement of clear benchmarks and indicators to ensure that development through education reform is strengthened and sustainable. Through shared accountability with developing countries and global partners, CIDA will work to enhance the quality and effectiveness of its programming, and will continue its focus on the critical importance of building the capacity of developing countries.

CIDA will monitor progress using standards and indicators that are available at various levels: country, regional, and international.

Developing-country level

The Dakar Framework for Action set specific education targets that are central to the definition of policy priorities and to the measurement of outcomes. The framework asks all countries to develop National Plans of Action that specify reforms, that are time-bound and action-oriented, and that establish clear performance indicators. CIDA will work with developing countries and other partners to assist with the development of these national plans. National plans for educational reform should include indicators that measure educational access, equality, and quality, in both formal and non-formal settings.

As part of the EFA (Education for All) process, many developing countries are currently improving systems for measuring the achievement of learning outcomes in areas such as literacy and numeracy. Where sound systems exist, they can provide clear indicators of improvements in the quality of basic education programs, at the primary, secondary, and adult-education levels. CIDA will support efforts to improve the assessment and evaluation of learning.

Regional level

In several regions, organizations focusing on the measurement of educational statistics and indicators are working to improve data gathering on education and to provide valuable information for the use of developing countries and their partners. CIDA will make full use of all appropriate measures that are available.

International level

Internationally, there has been considerable progress in agreeing on indicators that measure success in progress toward the goal of education for all. CIDA will support the efforts of national governments to monitor progress through improved data gathering, analysis, and dissemination. To date, the following indicators have been used to measure progress in achieving the goals of Education for All:

- Net enrolment rates, which indicate the total number of students enrolled in a schooling level who belong in the relevant age group, expressed as a percentage of the total number in that age group. These rates are disaggregated by gender. The EFA target for primary-school-age students is a net enrolment rate of 100 percent by 2015. Gender differences in the rate should disappear by 2005. Net enrolment rates are indicators of access and equality.

- Completion rates, disaggregated by gender, which provide an indication of student retention. Again, the EFA target is 100 percent of students at the primary-school level by 2015, with gender differences to disappear by 2005. Given the close links that research has revealed between retention and the perceived quality of education, improved completion rates can be used as an indication of both improved quality and equality within education systems.

With increased emphasis on the goal of providing basic education of quality, in addition to improving access and equality, it will be essential to develop a broad range of internationally recognized qualitative indicators. CIDA is committed to working with its many partners to support research and development of sound qualitative indicators.

Operationally, CIDA has a results-based management approach for its programs and projects, and this approach will be used by its branches, when appropriate, to identify outcomes, results, and impacts in basic education.

Progress will also be measured through the impact that improved delivery of basic education will have on CIDA's three other Social Development Priorities; basic education will have a key role in improved health and nutrition, in combatting HIV/AIDS, and in child protection.

Ultimately, progress toward the full realization of Education for All will be apparent in both quantitative and qualitative measures, and its impact on poverty reduction and effective, equitable, and sustainable development will be concrete and measurable.

VIII Conclusion

More than half a century has passed since the Univeral Declaration of Human Rights made basic education a right for all people. At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, 150 countries reaffirmed their commitment to that right, and promised to dedicate the necessary time, resources, and energy to ensure that finally, this time, the right to basic education will be realized by all.

The targets that were set in Dakar are ambitious, but must not be compromised. The complexity of the task ahead will require new responses—responses that are innovative, appropriate, and sustainable. In developing these responses, CIDA will draw on the strong support and partnerships it has built nationally and internationally.

As we move toward the achievement of Education for All, the sharing of information, of lessons learned, and of the project knowledge base—both within CIDA and with other partners, donors, and stakeholders—will be of critical importance. In implementing CIDA's framework for action in basic education, CIDA is determined that traditional partnerships—both in Canada and internationally—will be strengthened, and new forms of partnership will be developed.

Within Canada, CIDA will enhance its historic relationships with non-governmental organizations, national associations, universities, colleges, and the private sector. CIDA will renew and strengthen cooperation with teachers, schools, school boards, and provincial ministries of education, all of which represent a rich base of expertise in education. At the same time, CIDA will continue its internal capacity-building in education and improve its alignment and coordination among branches.

At the international level, CIDA will work more closely with multilateral agencies, and will develop closer cooperation with other bilateral donors. CIDA will also develop new and more effective forms of partnership with a variety of educational stakeholders in developing countries, recognizing at all times that developing countries are in the lead.

Most importantly, CIDA, along with its partners, will look at basic education within a broader perspective of development—that is both needs- and rights-based— and will build on cross-connections and synergies among human rights, gender equality, and other social development priorities.

The challenge is clear: basic education is a human right that should be accessible and attainable for all. CIDA is committed to supporting initiatives to meet this challenge. As more countries focus on education as a fundamental human right, and work to strengthen their education systems at all levels, both formal and non-formal, the achievement of universal basic education will pay rich dividends in improved quality of life, strengthened social systems, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. This vision is widely shared, and is one to which CIDA is dedicated as we move toward Education for All.

Glossary of terms

Basic education

Basic education consists of a combination of knowledge, values, and skills that serves as the foundation for an individual's lifelong learning. It includes literacy, numeracy, competencies, and life skills that enable individuals to function effectively in their physical and social environ-ment. Basic education may be provided through formal primary and early secondary education, or through non-formal education.

Curriculum

Curriculum refers to the explicit and implicit, organized experiences that a learner encounters during the process of learning. It includes formal, planned courses or modules of study, as well as other factors such as values, rules, administrative procedures, social attitudes, organizational structures, and management approaches inherent in the environment, whether these be in formal or non-formal educational settings.

Decentralized education

Decentralization of education involves the redistribution of the responsibility for the control of schools. While nearly all countries have a national education ministry with responsibility for the system as a whole, a decentralized system provides local communit-ies with the autonomy to assess and resolve their own problems and strengthen their local schools. Local governing bodies, with member-ship drawn from parents, teachers, and the community, manage resources, monitor the quality of education, and take an active role in school reform.

Distance education

At its most basic level, distance education takes place when a teacher and student(s) are separated by physical distance, and technology (i.e., voice, video, data, and print), often in concert with face-to-face communication, is used to bridge the instructional gap. These types of programs can provide adults with a second chance at a college education, reach those disadvantaged by limited time, distance or physical disability, and update the knowledge base of workers at their places of employment.

Early childhood education

Early childhood education programs are designed to serve the needs of children in their pre-primary years. World Bank project research indicates that children who parti-cipate in sound early childhood education programs tend to be more successful later in school. For example, when children have early literacy experiences, such as being read to regularly, they will have greater success in learning to read later.

Learner-centred education

In learner-centred education, the student, rather than the teacher, is the central focus of activity in the classroom. Teachers do not rely on dictation, rote-learning, or lecture. Instead, teachers are facilitators within a supportive learning environment, encouraging active participation, critical thinking, creativity, and expression of thoughts and ideas. Students learn through activities and experiences that are designed to accommodate individual abilities, needs, and interests.

Net enrolment ratio

The net enrolment ratio is the number of enrolled school-aged children expressed as a ratio of the number of children in the eligible age group. This is a more precise indicator of the extent to which universal primary education is indeed being achieved.

Non-formal education

Non-formal education is based on community mobilization and participation. Characteristics of successful non-formal education include community ownership of facilities, community involvement in teacher selection and training, flexibility in instructional time to meet students' needs, a focus on girls or other marginalized groups, and a curriculum that is highly relevant to local conditions and needs.

Primary education

Primary education refers to schooling that children normally receive between the ages of 6 and 11. The official definition of primary age varies between countries. The formal primary school is the usual setting for primary education, but non-formal and flexible approaches are necessary to ensure that primary education is universal.

Quality of education

Quality of education is measured against the school's ability to meet students' cognitive needs and foster their physical, social, and emotional development. Education of high quality will be learner-centred and address each student's unique capabilities and needs. The quality of education must be measured against issues of gender equality, equity, health and nutrition, parental and community involvement, and the management of the education system itself.

Sector-wide approaches (SWAPs)

Sector-wide approaches are a means by which developing country governments and donor countries work together on broad programmatic lines, rather than through the management of a number of individual projects. Donor funding for development activities in a sector such as education will support a single sector policy and expenditure program under government leadership rather than toward discrete, and often donor-driven, projects.

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Photo captions and credits

Cover

Latin America and the Caribbean enjoy the highest enrolment rates of any region in the developing world. However, the poor quality of education in many areas, as well as the students' economic and social circumstances, lead to high drop-out rates. Even after six years of school, half of the students in Latin America do not attain basic literacy.
CIDA photo: Greg Kinch

Page i

A girl in class at a school in Eritrea. She is in the minority: only about 30 percent of girls in this African country are enrolled in school.
CIDA photo: Cheryl Albuquerque

Pages ii-iii

A girl from the Karen tribe in her classroom in Thailand.
CIDA photo: Cindy Andrew

Page iv

As part of its Basic Education Action Plan, CIDA will support training for teachers at all levels of the education system. In addition to initial training, CIDA will support professional development for teachers such as in-service courses, as well as programs that enhance working conditions.
CIDA photo: David Barbour

Pages vi-vii

In this rural school in Malaysia, boys and girls study the Koran together. As one of its goals in basic education, CIDA puts special emphasis on support for marginalized groups, including girls and children living in remote regions.
CIDA photo: Virginia Boyd

Pages viii-1

In the village of Yang Pa, in southern China, girls and women belonging to the Miao ethnic-minority group can get an education, thanks to support from UNICEF.
CIDA photo: Roger LeMoyne

Pages 2-3

In the Amerindian village of St. Cuthbert's Mission, Guyana, an increasing number of children are attending school. With the help of volunteers from the Canadian Executive Service Organization, some of the children's mothers have formed a handicraft association. Adopting more effective production techniques and creating new products have enabled the women to earn a better income and improve living conditions for their families.
CIDA photo: Greg Kinch

Page 4

In Jaipur, in the Indian province of Rajasthan, funding from CIDA has helped Save the Children Canada provide these child labourers with basic education. Classes in this nonformal school are located near the children's place of work, and take place after work hours. An estimated 77 million children work in India.
CIDA photo: David Trattles

Page 5

Education enriches the lives of individuals, both through heightened awareness and the pleasure of knowledge, and through increased empowerment, dignity, and self-worth.
CIDA photo: Bruce Paton

Page 6

With education, girls tend to marry later and have fewer children than less-educated women. They also more fully understand the benefits of good nutrition, sanitation, and immunization for themselves and their children.
CIDA photo: Bruce Paton

Page 7

In the village of Malipara, in northern Bangladesh, a social assistant (right) is providing a young pregnant woman with some basic dietary information. She will also advise her on breast-feeding, risks during pregnancy, and iron supplements. Improved literacy has a direct impact on women's health.
CIDA photo:
Nancy Durrell McKenna

Pages 8-9

A 17-year-old former child soldier sits in a classroom at Christ the King College in the southern town of Bo, Sierra Leone. He became a soldier at age 14, and is now working to rebuild his life.
UNICEF/HQ98-0551:
Giacomo Pirozzi

Page 10

A classroom in a rural school in Jinotega, Nicaragua. The rural population receives nearly three years less schooling than the national average of 4.5 years, owing to the high dropout and repetition rates during the early years of basic education. The education system continues to suffer from low levels of learning due to the poor quality of teaching resources and the lack of supplies.
CIDA photo: Peter Bennett

Page 11

A rural classroom in Guizhou province, southern China. With assistance from CIDA, these children, who belong to the Miao ethnic-minority group, are able to receive an education.
CIDA photo: Roger LeMoyne

Page 13

Victoria is learning to read Braille at the PromHandiCam School in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Funded by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, this institution helps promote the social and economic integration of young people between the ages of 15 and 25 who are physically or mentally disabled. Depending on the particular situation, students are taught to read Braille, or are trained in sewing or woodworking.
CIDA photo: Roger LeMoyne

Page 15

An adolescent girl teaches students in Turicevc, a village in the province of Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The class is part of a child-to-child landmine awareness program that trains adolescents to recognize and avoid landmines. They, in turn, train younger children by using games and other interactive learning methods. With the assistance of UNICEF, the international non-governmental organization Adventist Development Relief Agency runs the program.
UNICEF/HQ99-1128:
Roger LeMoyne

Pages 16-17

Education of women is one of the most important investments a developing country can make.
CIDA photo: Bruce Paton

Page 18

A woman helps her daughter with her homework in a village in north-eastern Thailand.
CIDA photo: David Barbour

Page 19

This special bus, funded by Canada, travels through the city of Salvador, Brazil, providing information on sexual exploitation, sexually trans-mitted diseases, and AIDS, especially to street children. Learning about these vital issues gives children the confidence and knowledge to make

responsible decisions about their sexual behaviour and to resist coercion. *CIDA photo: Pierre St-Jacques*

Pages 20-21
Bhutan, one of the world's smallest and most isolated countries, has a free and universal primary education system. In one decade, this South Asian country managed to double its literacy rate. One of CIDA's goals in basic education is to ensure that all children have access to free and compulsory universal education of good quality by 2015.
CIDA photo: Cindy Andrew

Page 22
In Akarade, a village in rural Benin, a group of village elders, who attend a literacy class, practise their writing. *CIDA photo: Stephanie Colvey*

Page 23
From all parts of the country, these Guatemalan men and women are being trained in basic subjects at the rural health-promotion training centre in Chimalte-Nango. *CIDA photo: Patricio Baeza*

Pages 24-25
By simulating buying and selling, these children are learning how to calculate and compare prices and quantities and to read packaging labels, particularly the expiry dates on various items. The practical training provided at the Khazana Centre teaches literacy and helps

develop an entrepreneurial spirit. Funded by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, the program targets children in one of the largest slums in New Delhi, India. *CIDA photo: Stephanie Colvey*

Page 26
With a desk for the teacher, two logs to serve as benches for the students, and trees for shelter, a classroom is improvised in a village inhabited by immigrants and refugees in Zimbabwe. *CIDA photo: Bruce Paton*

Page 27
Information and communications technologies can provide new and exciting learning tools for unlocking students' creativity. *CIDA photo: Roger LeMoyne*

Pages 28-29
At a community school in Ndoyene, Senegal, children between the ages of 9 and 15 who have not gone to school can complete the primary program in four years rather than six. CIDA provides funding for this non-formal education program. *CIDA photo: Pierre St-Jacques*

Pages 30-31
Children at a school in La Paz, Bolivia, the poorest and least-developed country in South America. *CIDA photo: Greg Kinch*

Page 32
Adolescents work together in a workshop held in Salvador, the capital of the northeastern state of Bahia, Brazil. The workshop is part of a UNICEF-assisted program run by the local non-governmental organization Cipo, which promotes youth development and leadership skills in city neighbourhoods and communities. Workshop activities are developed based on input from the adolescents.
UNICEF/HQ00-0437: Alejandro Balaguer

Page 33
The children in this class work as ragpickers and gem cutters in Jaipur, India. The NGO Pairokar Vikas Samiti provides a non-formal education program for these disadvantaged children. *CIDA photo: David Trattles*

Page 34
A teacher encourages a student in a school set up in a refugee camp in Kukes, Albania. Basic education can promote peace, tolerance, and mutual understanding, as well as respect for human rights. Ultimately, education can help mitigate the effects of civil strife and ethnic hostilities. *CIDA photo: Stephanie Colvey*

Pages 36-37

Madhu (right), a graduate of a teacher's program, now teaches at the preschool in the village of Khorwad in the Indian province of Gujarat.
CIDA photo: Stephanie Colvey

Pages 38-39

In some developing countries, the cost of textbooks and school uniforms keeps many poor children out of school. For girls, additional issues such as domestic chores, and high dowries also hinder access to basic education. In addition, pregnancy, poor health, and the risks of walking long distances eventually cause many girls to drop out of school.
CIDA photo: Peter Bennett

Pages 40-41

Household Displaced: this card is part of a game that helps war-affected children in Sri Lanka trace their family trees, and get in touch with their feelings of loss. Through games like this, children can also strengthen their numeracy and literacy skills.
CIDA photo: Stephanie Colvey

Page 44

In this Palestinian school in Rafa, in the Gaza Strip, deaf children are learning sign language. As part of its goal to improve access to quality education for children with disabilities and special needs, CIDA supports a variety of approaches— from formal classrooms to non-formal, community-based settings.
CIDA photo: Peter Bennett