

AFRICAN FORUM OF PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR EDUCATION
(FAPED)

SECOND MEETING OF THE CONTACT GROUP

MAURITIUS, 05 - 08 JUNE 2002

FINAL REPORT

The 2nd meeting of the Contact Group for the creation of the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (FAPED) was held in Port Louis, Mauritius from 5 to 8 June 2002.

The meeting was a follow-up on the first session held in Dakar, Senegal (21 to 23 January 2002) with the support of UNESCO / BREDA and of the partners of the United Nations system.

The delegates of the following countries and organizations attended the meeting: Cameroon, Cape Verde, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Namibia, Senegal, and Sudan, UNESCO, the African Parliamentary Union, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the development partners.

The present report summarizes the proceedings and delivers the conclusions of the meeting.

June 05, 2002

The agenda was composed of two items:

- the registration of the delegates,
- an informal session at the Radisson Hotel Conference room from 5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. on the setting up of the Bureau of the meeting .

The following Bureau was set up:

Chairman : Hon. Dr. Rajesh Bhowan, Parliamentarian from Mauritius

Vice Chairman: Hon. Moulai Abdelaziz Alaoui Hafidi, Vice President of Moroccan House of Representatives.

Rapporteur : Hon. Mathew Adams Karauri, Parliamentarian from Kenya

After the informal session, the judicial committee composed of Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, Mauritius, and the African Parliamentary Union, met to examine the draft Statute of the FAPED, presented by former Chief Justice of Mauritius, Sir Victor Glover.

The members of the judicial committee adopted the draft Statutes with minor amendments.

June 06, 2002

1. Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony took place at the National Assembly of Mauritius under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and in the presence of the members of his government, the diplomatic corps, the parliamentarians and the development partners.

Addresses were delivered by the following personalities:

- (i) Hon. Deputy Mame Bousso Diack/SAMB, representing Senegal's National Assembly Speaker,
- (ii) Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen, Director of BRENDA/UNESCO,
- (iii) Hon. Steve Obeegadoo, Minister of Education and Scientific Research, Mauritius
- (iv) Hon. Mr Premnah Ramnah, Mauritius' National Assembly Speaker,
- (v) Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, Mauritius' Prime Minister.

In their speeches, the speakers expressed their support to the FAPED and stressed the need for member nations to collaborate with each other to establish the FAPED.

They also emphasized that the support of partners such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and others was crucial to the success of the project.

2. The proceedings

The following items were studied during the proceedings at the Radisson Hotel:

A- *Objectives and strategies of the FAPED:* presented by Moustapha Ka, BREDA's Consultant.

The presentation laid the foundation for advocacy by the parliamentarians in favour of the development of education in Africa. The emphasis was particularly put on the vital role that parliamentarians must play in planning, decision-making, mobilization and assessment of resources to ensure that Education For All becomes reality.

The current progress made to improve Education For All in Africa by the year 2005 will be in jeopardy without the commitment and the support of parliamentarians to education reforms in their country.

The speaker emphasized the mobilization of parliamentarians and the setting up of partnerships to take up the following challenges:

- Poverty
- Infant and mother mortality
- Proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS
- Education for All
- Illiteracy
- Gender issues

Concerning this question, the members of the Contact Group were unanimous that the initiatives of the FAPED should be included in the framework for development of NEPAD .

B- *Advocacy for open and distance learning:* presented by Dr (Ms) Asha Kanwar, BREDA's Consultant

Dr Kanwar insisted on the importance to adopt open and distance learning as a cost affective way to guarantee access to high quality education, particularly in Africa where resources are scarced.

- C- *Draft Statutes for the creation of the FAPED:*** presented by the former Chief Justice of Mauritius, Sir Victor Glover and adopted with minor amendments.
- D- *Draft internal rules and regulations:*** also presented by Sir Victor Glover and adopted with minor amendments.

June 07, 2002

The meeting started with the replacement of the Vice Chairman from Morocco by Hon. Mame Bousso Diack/SAMB, member of Senegal's Parliament. The editing committee was then appointed and was composed of representatives from Cameroon, Cape Verde, Namibia, Mauritius and UNESCO/BREDA.

The proceedings resumed with the examination of the following items:

E-Program and Budget: presented by Moustapha Ka.

The main conclusion of this presentation was that each country should have a national parliamentary committee for Education, with an annual budget of US\$ 20,000 in order to carry out its own activities on a national level. The financing of this budget could be mobilized through donors of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as through the national authorities.

A provision was made, on the basis of six (6) regions, to hold annual meetings to exchange ideas and to cooperate. The FAPED and its partners should be in charge of the financing of these activities.

The annual conferences that will be held every two (2) years should be organized and financed by the FAPED. The parliamentarians of the Contact Group undertook to make every effort to ensure the participation of all African parliaments in the FAPED General Constitutive Conference to be held in Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania, in conjunction with the 8th Conference of the Ministers of Education in Africa (MINEDAF VIII), November 27 - December 02, 2002.

As regards the setting up of the parliamentary committees in all member states, the members of the Contact Group, in collaboration with BREDA, committed themselves to sensitising members of Parliaments in the countries sharing the same geographic area to ensure the set – up of the national parliamentary committees.

The African Parliamentary Union expressed its interest to continue to collaborate with BREDA and the Contact Group. An invitation will be addressed to the initiators to attend APU's next Conference, which will be in Khartoum from 21 to 24 October 2002.

Finally, to ensure a correct operation of the Secretariat as soon as January 2003, an initial budget of US\$200,000 will be set up to support the salaries, various compensations, and equipments of the Executive Director and his/ her assistant.

E- *Financial Rules and Regulation:* presented by Mr Diamani Kalombo of the African Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Diamani stressed that the budget will be financed by the member States and mainly by donors. The document was adopted with minor amendments.

G- *Declaration of Port Louis:* presented by Moustapha Ka.

The title of the Declaration should be changed to " Declaration of Dar-es-Salam or Arusha", depending on where the General Conference will be held in November/December 2002.

The content of the Declaration was adopted with minor amendments.

H- *Messages from UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA and the World Bank.*

The representatives of these organizations renewed their commitment to continuing to support the process of the creation of the FAPED and its actions, and recognized the right for all the children to education and the need to reduce gender disparities in education.

I- *Provisional programme of FAPED' General Constitutive Conference in November/December 2002:* presented by Moustapha Ka, Consultant.

The Director of BREDA informed the participants that each of the fifty three (53) African countries will be represented at the General Conference by two (2) representatives. Some personalities such as the founding members of the FAPED, the Speakers of Senegal and Mauritius National Assemblies will be invited. Other dignitaries such as the Speaker of the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union and the African Parliamentary Union, as well as the Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania (country hosting the General Conference) will be invited. The Conference will be

held from November 27 to December 02, 2002. The broad orientations of the program were adopted.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the meeting, it was admitted that education is the solution for peace, stability and economic development. To quote Mr Birger FREDRIKSEN of the World Bank: “ there is a large worldwide consensus on the key role education plays in the social and economic development process of any nation. This includes the role education plays in building strong democratic institutions, and in empowering individuals to make personal and social choices. Education is also the ultimate equalizer, particularly in promoting greater equity for women and for the poor since education often is the only capital that disadvantaged groups can aspire to acquire”.

The second meeting of the Contact Group provided us with the opportunity to discuss organizational and financial issues as regards the creation of the FAPED. The participants engaged in frank and fruitful discussions. We ended the meeting with a feeling of being enriched and confident that a step forward has been made towards the Constitutive Conference in Tanzania. Before then, the mission of the members of the Contact Group is to sensitize their national assemblies and respective regions, with the support of UNESCO for the realization of the objectives of the Conference of December 2002.

On the closing ceremony, chaired by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius, Premnah Ramnah, the following personalities delivered addresses:

Hon Dr. Rajesh Bhoowan, member of Mauritius Parliament;
Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Secretary General of the African Parliamentary Union;
Manuel Veiga, Parliamentarian from Cabo Verde and spokesman of the delegates,
Françoise Labelle, Parliamentarian from Mauritius ;
Armoogum Parsuramen, Director of the BREDA,
Premnah Ramnah, Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius.
