

Concept paper

Regional Workshop on Secondary Education

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Table of Contents

1.	The Context.....	3
2.	Objectives of the Workshop.....	5
3.	Preparatory work: The Case Studies.....	7
4.	Expected Outcomes of the Workshop.....	9
5.	Proposed Topics.....	11
	Partnership in the governance and management of schools.....	11
	The curriculum.....	13
	Secondary education reforms and teacher training.....	16
	Managing transitions and educational innovations.....	20
	The problems related to access, equity and quality.....	21
6.	Conclusion.....	24

The Context

Secondary education is a vital part of the education sector – one that has important implications for a country's efforts to improve the quality of life of its people. It plays a pivotal role in achieving rapid economic growth in developing countries in particular. In all educational systems, secondary education holds a middle position between primary and tertiary sectors in terms of structure and content. (This paper will focus on lower and upper secondary education, covering grades 7 to 12/13 and the age group of 11/12 to 17/18 and use the generally accepted terminology). As a result of this privileged position, this subsystem therefore holds responsibilities, which put it inevitably at the centre of all reforms pertaining to the overall educational system. In fact, society insists more and more that secondary education be, at the same time, job oriented, i.e. producing school leavers who are functionally ready for work, as well as preparing students for higher education. To these two missions, is added a third inevitably complex one, which consists of setting up admission structures for an increasing school population that constantly emerges from the primary sector. At the same time, however, the secondary education sector has to take into account a series of new decisions ranging from such issues as the environment, peace culture, human rights to problems like drug addiction, AIDS, poverty and unemployment, which cover social problems rather than what really pertains to education.

There are other reasons for considering investment in secondary education. In all countries secondary education is crucial for economic growth, as a result of globalisation, of the importance of ICT and of rapid technological change. Without secondary education, countries cannot have the critical higher level skills and knowledge needed for economic growth, including further learning and training of professionals. Secondary education also plays a crucial role in socialising young people and youth at risk. Research has shown that vulnerable groups belong primarily to the secondary education age group where there is the greatest ability for behavioural change, for fostering positive social attitudes, civic values and such other social engineering. Though it is believed that basic education yields considerable public returns, secondary education provides opportunities

to acquire attitudes, job-oriented skills and competencies that are not likely to be developed while pupils are in primary schools. As such secondary school graduates participate more fully in the socio-economic development of their society, take control of their own lives more fully and continue learning.

In mostly African developing countries, secondary education has to meet the following three requirements in a rather difficult environment:

1. inadequate infrastructure,
2. Lack of proper equipment and laboratories and
3. Limited qualified staff despite financial efforts of Governments etc.

Africa is faced with the challenges of developing secondary and youth education initiatives at a time of crisis and post-crisis transition. The absence of an effective model of secondary education to deal with these crises heightens the need for urgent study and action. A new set of demands have been created on education that the old organisations and processes are unable to satisfy: new situations regarding work and employment, the continued development of new technologies of production and communication, conditions of ethnic conflicts, wars and refugees.

Another difficulty is posed by the effect of HIV/AIDS in Africa. This epidemic is presenting formidable challenges to the secondary education sector: teacher loss, adjustments in response to the special needs of a rapidly increasing number of AIDS orphans, curriculum modification, altered roles impacting on teacher training, administrators and educational planning and implementation systems, as well as other institutions in society.

Though it plays the central role as regulator in the educational set up, little attention has been paid to the sub sector of secondary education. During these past years the contribution of bilateral and multilateral aid has been mainly focussed on other sectors of education, namely primary, tertiary and non-formal education. Reports drawn

up at the OAU Conference by Ministers of Education (COMEDAF, Harare 15th– 19th March, 1999) and the meeting of the Consortium on secondary education organised by UNESCO (Paris 10th–11th June, 1999) arrive at the same conclusion. For UNICEF (June 1999) secondary education should not be viewed in a vacuum, or even only in relation to primary and higher education, but in relation to **the overall learning needs of adolescents** (10-19 years). In this regard the extent to which secondary education meets these needs and the role of other learning opportunities must also be considered, particularly in relation to their opportunity to further develop skills that will enable them to learn throughout life.

In order to overcome the challenges of the 21st century and to allow secondary education play its role effectively as regulator in the overall system of education in promoting a variety of training skills and various forms of learning, this sector should urgently be re-organised.

Medium term documents delineating strategies (1996–2001) and the two–year program (2000–2001) of UNESCO indicate that the strategy to be adopted is to diversify the structures, to expand payment systems for services at secondary level, to renew study programs and pedagogical methods, to use new information technologies as well as to maintain ongoing efforts to eradicate inequalities between the various domains in secondary education.

A variety of approaches must be devised to re-organise this sector in order to better meet the needs of an ever increasing school population while at the same time taking into consideration priority recommendations developed by COMEDAF and the World Education Forum at Dakar, namely equity; quality; the development of complementary learning methods, the reinforcement of co-ordination skills, follow–ups and evaluation and the diversification of learning methods.

Furthermore, there is the underlying predominance of the informal sector of the economy in many countries that play an important role in eradicating poverty and unemployment of youth. These are the issues to be raised when considering secondary education reforms. This diversification may already be considered as from the transition

following basic education and as from now in view of the expansion of primary education that would manifest as a result of recommendations from the Dakar Forum.

There are other pressures on secondary schools and the new conditions for learning include the following: a natural transition from dependence (on traditional institutions such as the family and the Church) to independence, the fall in the age of puberty, the later age of marriage and commencement of child-birth, less interaction between parents and children, the reduction of certainty of employment, the growth of an increasingly materialistic youth culture being influenced by mass media, and the invasion of ICT.

II. Objectives of the workshop:

Taking into account these facts and the need therefrom to reform secondary education, the UNESCO Regional Office, in collaboration with the national Commissions, regional bodies, including government as well as NGOs and the World Bank, is proposing to organise in December 2001, a regional consultancy of experts with the following aims:

- to probe in depth the subsystem of secondary education in Africa at the beginning of the 21st century (the operational and the non operational, programs and contents, adaptability and inadaptability of structures, equalities and inequalities, equities and inequities etc);
- to analyse problems related to the transition between basic and secondary education, in view of proposing a variety of learning strategies aimed at solving unemployment and youth poverty;
- to explore new approaches to initiate in-depth reforms;
- to identify priority needs that would allow the subsystem to meet the expectations of the population;

- to encourage an international, regional and national dynamic co-operation of stakeholders (Consortium) which would bring about reforms and encourage the development of secondary education in Africa.
- To provide for youth education in order to meet the learning needs of millions of out-of-school youth and ex-child soldiers and other combatants in sub-Saharan Africa who, for many reasons, cannot gain access to formal secondary schools and require services from rapid learning programs, through participation in both special formal and non-formal education programs.
- To finance public and private secondary education, with an emphasis on public education, especially at the lower secondary level due to high levels of demand resulting from increasing numbers of students who have completed primary education.
- To revising current national testing and assessment systems, especially because some of the current systems truncate attempts to reform secondary education, to ensure it is appropriate to the learning needs of students and the societies where they live, and to improve the quality of secondary education.
- To search for ways to achieve collective action to attract international funding support for improving and expanding public secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa.

III. Preparatory work: The case studies

Prior to the workshop, UNESCO Office in Dakar, in co-operation with national commissions, regional, governmental and non-governmental organisations and other partners (OAU, FAWE, ADEA, CONFEMEN, ROCARE, ERNESA, etc.) and in accordance with the 2000-2001 programme and budget, decided to embark on studies in ten African countries or so selected in the region. These studies were to provide the framework for a regional meeting of experts on the practical modalities of secondary education reform. The case studies were to

- a) draw up the inventory of the usual programmes and practices in each country with a view to exploring new approaches to carry out in-depth reform ;
- b) identify priority needs in the sub-system so as to come up to people's expectations.

In this perspective, the approaches were not meant to be restricted to the fact of trying to increase the rate of admission to that level. They concerned also the development of priority fields identified by COMEDAF, namely equity, access to education, the quality, relevance and efficiency of the education system as a whole.

The proposed themes, without being exhaustive, covered structures, content, methods and secondary education monitoring and evaluation system.

Structures: In recent years, many countries experienced diversification of secondary education, the creation of many streams and links aimed at promoting the articulation and integration of general education and technical and vocational education.

- **Content:** The content to be promoted within the framework of the renewal of secondary education were of course based on the learning and training needs identified in this field. Generally, traditional contents (basic knowledge, instrumental knowledge, etc.) are no longer enough to meet the needs of the society. New contents which are related more to social issues than educational ones must be integrated into the curriculum, for example, learning attitudes and behaviours in keeping with multicultural, national and international values which contribute to helping the adult student fulfil his/her role as a responsible citizen.
- **Methods:** The renewal of secondary education should necessarily go hand-in-hand with reflection on the means to be implemented to achieve it. With no intention of changing completely the architecture of the college or high school, the reform should propose a new environment making it possible for new teaching and learning

practices to emerge. In this regard, the use of new information and communication technologies can make it possible to improve the quality of education.

- The teacher is the keystone of the secondary school system; he/she is the one who has the formidable responsibility to initiate students into issues that the society passed off onto him/her. New types of training are needed if we want to meet new demands.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** As the provision of new programmes must be assessed both by teachers and other education partners, many levels are involved :
 - the thematic evaluation of programmes implementation modalities,
 - the evaluation of the way students appropriate thoroughly the notions and knowledge included in the programmes,
 - the evaluation of the assessment capabilities of teachers and other people concerned.

These case studies were to be then presented in the form of a synthesis paper to reflect the major concerns of the countries that wrote the case studies as well as the realities of the African continent as a whole.

IV. Expected Outcomes of the workshop:

With the advent of this regional consultation of experts, the following will be expected:

- A better understanding of the actual situation of this sub-system in the region; an identification of difficulties being met by Governments as well as the various measures and strategies being adopted, or to be adopted to solve problems while at the same time taking into account the specificities of countries going through crisis or recovering from such crisis and for which it is urgent to reconstruct this sub-system; a deeper insight of the preoccupations, the assessments and the vision of

African experts (Policy Makers, Planners, Researchers, Administrators etc.) in their management of secondary education of everyday; the presentation of current evidence and best practices illustrating the expansion and improvement of secondary education in Africa;

- The preparation and printing of a publication describing the current status, constraints, problems and needs of secondary and youth education in selected nations plus the proceedings of the Workshop and its outcomes; the elaboration and publications of guidelines and general orientations for reforms in the sub sectors; the elaboration of a concrete regional action plan to be undertaken in the next biennium which would include pilot projects to be executed at national and sub regional level;
- The setting up of an international partnership (consortium) for secondary education reforms; the development of a strategy for attracting greater international support for financing reforms and innovations of public secondary and youth education in sub-Saharan Africa;
- The creation and description of a collaborative mechanism for maintaining a high level of interest;
- The initiation of pilot projects to be implemented in the framework of sub-regional and regional co-operation, following a revitalisation of regional and sub-regional networks, or to be submitted for the approval of African Ministers in MINEDAF VIII;
- The development of an on-line forum, an Internet 'space' for conference participants to follow up on their work, to help ensure that the momentum continues to build. This implies the use of ICT to create light, flexible, learning networks to support high quality, rapid response, strategic policy formation for education sector and cross-sector activities. Networks can simultaneously reach out to many levels of government and civil society, thus increasing the opportunities for a rapid response.

V. **Proposed Topics:**

1. **Partnership in the governance and management of schools**

The involvement of basic communities in the management and in matters relating to secondary education is considered to be extremely important in all research surveys carried out so far. Till now, however, secondary level education has been considered the concern of solely government ministries. Basic communities (municipalities or communes, the civilian community, the NGOs) have been very little involved in the management and administration of secondary level educational institutions. But, the school whether primary or secondary, is the concern of everyone. There are so many realities linking it to problems facing society, even at local levels: unemployment crisis, poverty of youth, drug addiction, AIDS and recruitment in the militia in countries undermined by war crisis etc. There is therefore a need to give secondary education a second thought while taking into account the needs of the youth at all levels of society and involve the basic communities in its day to day management in order that it be geared to concrete problems solving facing the youth. In this respect, community schools considered till now as a limited innovation to basic education, has to be extended to secondary education.

The centralised system of management of many secondary school systems does not give enough flexibility to regional and local level school administration to adjust the curriculum to local needs, to recruit the type of staff it requires or to involve communities, parents, teachers and students in educational decisions that affect them primarily. While teachers and Head teachers do not feel accountable to local communities, the latter as well as parents do not participate actively in school affairs.

Increasingly, throughout the world, a clear trend towards the decentralisation or control over the education service has emerged. This trend is evident both in developing countries and in countries where basic education has been firmly established over a considerable period. It is important to understand that

decentralisation can take a number of forms. It may involve only moving the administrative apparatus or a centralised state system out from headquarters to local areas. At the other extreme it may imply transferring substantial powers away from the state itself towards local government, school proprietors or even the schools themselves. Such cases are more common in large countries. Decentralisation may be seen also within the individual institution.

The main common thrust of these various kinds of organisational change is that decision-making is moved out from central authority to people nearer the classroom. Empowerment is thus devolved on the schools and the classrooms. It is then possible to instil greater variation in policy and practice, thereby making the system more responsive to changes and allowing for greater flexibility. All forms of decentralisation thus involve shifts in the distribution of powers and functions among the various sources of authority within the system. However, involving others in participating in the management, governance and accountability can also be open to some forms of abuse. This is an area where little is known of the benefits and disadvantages of the process. Careful study and thought are needed to ensure that changes are made in ways that are culturally acceptable and operationally effective.

On the other hand, it must be stressed that the decentralisation process needs time to be effectively communicated and accepted. The most important challenge facing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa is to find the right mechanisms and processes to delineate and distribute authority and responsibility in order to improve accountability and learning outcomes.

In considering this theme many other questions need to be answered:

- a. What can and should be done to widen participation in relation to school governance, i.e. to include and involve parents and wider family, businesses and wider communities?
- b. What policy decisions are needed to ensure that staffing costs do not over dominate and that decisions are taken as close as possible to the point of delivery?

- c. What are the needs for governance, management and accountability at the level of central, regional and school and classroom levels? Who define these needs? How can these be catered for?
- d. Will de-centralised policy decision making improve the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of secondary education delivery? What mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that these improvements occur?
- e. Can ICT improve decentralised secondary school-based management and accountability for learning outcomes? What type of ICT is required in what type of school?
- f. What type of training should be given to school staff, to parents and local communities for effective participation in school affairs?
- g. What type of collaborative activities are needed to develop a mosaic of support for strengthening the relationships between secondary schools and national non-governmental organisations focused on the development of civil society?

2. The curriculum

Curriculum issues have to be seen in relation to content, including knowledge, skills and understanding and to process, including pedagogy, methodology and delivery. No curriculum renewal can ignore the involvement of key stakeholders, including young people and teachers.

The concept of secondary education can be defined and justified in terms of various factors, but the pre-eminent factor that needs to be kept in mind is that it requires an understanding of the age of learners of secondary school students in an adolescent phase of personal development. As such, then, special provision has to be made in terms of “rites of passage” from childhood to adulthood”, involving much deeper learning and preparation for future adult roles and responsibilities.

In classical educational systems, secondary education occupies a middle position between the primary and tertiary levels. Programs and contents have therefore been conceived to play a functional role in allowing students access to higher education, in

preparing students for lifelong education and in getting them ready for the world of work. In addition to these traditional functions, society is now insisting more and more that secondary education takes into consideration a series of subjects ranging from the environment, peace culture, human rights to problems such as drug addiction, AIDS, poverty and unemployment and matters essentially related to social rather than educational issues. Secondary schools should therefore assume a new function, that of preparing youth for active life, to citizenship and to collective as well as individual responsibility. How to integrate these new topics and subjects in the secondary education programs? This is why there is a need to redefine programs, contents, and even the structures so that they meet the needs of the fast changing modern society.

There is unanimity on the importance of creating better links between secondary schools and the local job market. Increasingly mention is made of vocationalising general secondary education. No secondary curriculum can be complete without an analysis of the interface between education, training and the labour market. This includes enquiries designed to identify which generic skills are valued in labour markets, which may enhance income generation through improving adaptability to the business environment, how such skills are acquired particularly in secondary education, and accessibility by gender to skill development and consequently how these skills potentially contribute to poverty reduction.

There is also a need to study the link between skills acquired in formal secondary education and those needed in micro and small businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa, since roughly 90% of non-farm labour is employed in such enterprises (Parker, et al., 1995). It is important to have an integrated curriculum in education and training that rejects divisions in emphasis as academic-applied, theory-practice, knowledge-skills and general-vocational education, a theme that has increasing prevalence world wide. There is a case to be made for an educational curriculum that emphasises generic skills such as critical thinking, competencies and problem solving instead of content.

The most important challenge in the sector of secondary education curriculum is to develop one that is relevant, of high quality with an effective methodology of delivery, without forgetting emerging issues as teenage pregnancy, sexual harassment in schools, violence, the incidence of war, HIV/AIDS, civic education, health and life skills, family life education. In such initiatives youth must be emphasised as key resources for national development and all secondary programmes should include conflict resolution, mediation training and peer teaching to ensure early exposure to new behaviours conducive to peaceful conduct. Major emphasis needs to be placed on learning relevant to the formation of new skills for improving economic potential combined with community service in both urban and rural environments.

In many countries, it has been the national testing systems that have held back curricular reform and precluded the cultural derivation of curricula. Weak monitoring and assessment systems are possibly the most important obstacles for improved secondary education and its learning outcomes. Teachers commonly gear their teaching to examinations that often encourage rote-memorisation, thereby providing few opportunities for students to develop skills such as critical thinking, observation, problem-solving and creativity. One important challenge of secondary education reform relates to the manner in which examinations systems can be used as an effective tool to improve the quality and relevance of secondary education.

The following questions also need to be answered:

- a. What are the reasons for youth of a certain age to acquire prescribed learning in a formal setting?
- b. What motivates young citizens to seek opportunities for acquiring certain learning experiences?
- c. How to develop a curriculum that makes a serious commitment to lifelong learning, thereby reducing the pressure on initial education to provide all the skills for adult life except those that might be subsequently learnt informally?
- d. How to develop a proper linkage between vocational and general secondary education in easing the difficult transition between school and work?

- e. How to develop core curricula and teaching methods for youth on issues such as inter-ethnic respect, conflict resolution and mediation that will build the right behaviours and attitudes in young people?
- f. What kind of secondary education curricula and teaching need to be proposed that will well reflect the local economic and social trends as well as the modern trends of internationalisation and globalisation?
- g. How can effective and relevant secondary school curricula be delivered in a cost-effective manner, using the locally available resources in an optimum way?
- h. How to develop lifelong learning skills and reduce reliance on rote learning?
- i. What are the costs of introducing relevant curricula changes and better learning materials using ICT?
- j. How to retrain teachers in different subjects and new curriculum delivery?
- k. What is the impact of assessment and examination systems on secondary education and how can the present examinations systems be transformed into an effective tool to improve the quality and relevance of secondary education?

3. Secondary education reforms and teacher training

Teaching plays a central role in all educational reforms. The Delors Commission writes: “Improving the quality of education goes first through the recruitment of teachers, their training, their social status and working conditions, for much cannot be expected of them if they do not have the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and motivation.” Ref. (Education, A Hidden Treasure, Delors Commission, page 158).

To play this role, secondary schools need skilled teachers who must to be ready to cope with the knowledge explosion, to manage an ever growing complex educational system and to integrate into their programs new subjects like environment, demography, health science, peace, human rights, democracy and new technologies, as well as information and communication.

There appear, however, to be few good, proven strategies for enhancing the professionalism and capacity of teachers to promote active and individualised learning programs for students. Curricula, instructional materials, student assessment and teacher training are not always correctly aligned in most teacher training institutions. On the other hand, teachers also need proper adjustment to adapt to the use of new technologies and to ensure lifelong learning in the students.

Thus, to upgrade teaching, teachers of the Third millennium should be better trained and motivated. Teacher training for new recruits must be an ongoing process, a permanent recycling process, maintain knowledge update and provide avenues for a continuous acquisition of new skills.

Though considered by society as the main vectors of quality teaching, teachers who should nevertheless be able to work within a quite difficult economic and pedagogical environment, do not always enjoy support and are often inadequately motivated. Improving their environment is therefore a key factor for the success of all educational reforms.

Plans for teacher preparation and development should be seen with a holistic perspective. More teachers must be trained especially in key areas, under-qualified or untrained/under-trained in-service teachers should be upgraded, teacher knowledge and skills should be renewed and upgraded and teachers in general should be provided with regular professional support. All teacher development activities should take a whole school approach aiming at improving quality in the entire school environment and the community. The entire spectrum of personnel responsible for managing school education will need enhancement of their capacity in order to develop and maintain teacher and school quality. It is necessary to find the best and most cost-effective strategies that would be useful in providing teacher training and teacher support on an ongoing basis to a large number of teachers distributed in rural and remote areas without taking them away from teaching for long periods.

Pre-service teacher education programmes also require expansion, as there is considerable loss of trained human resources due to the system being severely affected

by HIV/AIDS and attrition. The challenge that the existing teacher education institutions currently face is how to reorient themselves to dual mode institutions and thereby increase their output of trained teachers. They should also be in a position to support the education system in providing recurrent training for upgrading and updating knowledge and skills of teachers. They could also take the lead in providing ongoing professional support using information and communication technologies.

Increasing the intake capacity in secondary education along with enhancing its relevance and quality has become a priority area in education, when we consider the drop in the interest in the teaching profession. Increasing the number of secondary schools to accommodate most of the output from basic education requires a large number of secondary school teachers and will imply a huge financial burden for governments. Alternate schooling possibilities have to be examined to evolve a more cost-effective system of secondary education, which will also provide for varied interest and aspirations of learners. The open schooling system, which has been found effective in some developing countries, may be a viable alternative for Sub-Saharan African countries.

There is to be an urgent reconsideration of the models used for initial teacher education and provision for preparation which takes into account the different needs of secondary school students and the different modalities that are available in Sub-Saharan Africa. When strategies are devised to provide serious opportunities to teachers to continue professional learning, it is not just a matter of managing access to courses and seminars that needs to be considered. Consideration must also be paid to the nature of teachers' work, the opportunities for professional self-management that are afforded, and the provision of opportunities for collaboration with colleagues in work and work preparation. Mechanisms for involving teachers in management of schools should also be actively probed and encouraged.

The following issues also need to be addressed:

- a. How to carry out a resource mapping exercise that notes the present situation and currently available resources (human, infrastructure and financial)?
- b. What policies and planning processes are required for the successful implementation of the most cost-effective strategies?
- c. What policy process would enable governments to show political and financial commitment to improving teacher development?
- d. How to identify capacity building areas necessary for the successful implementation of the policies and resultant programmes that will result in improving teacher development programs?
- e. How to select, design and implement a series of pilot projects in teacher development and secondary education that will lead the way in using other models (such as Open and Distance Learning) and that can be considered for scaling up into national and regional programs?
- f. How is it possible to identify and use the existing resources and expertise in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, with these drawn into a network of collaborating institutions, organisations, agencies and individuals?
- g. What resources are needed to produce core teacher development and secondary school curriculum and resources? (Core learning materials and resources must be assembled and where necessary, created to support both educators and learners. These materials have to be supplemented by local examples and customisations, provided by educators in all participating countries. Where these examples and customisations are fed back to the supporting institutions, these may be incorporated into materials. This must be done on an ongoing basis to ensure that the most complete set of locally relevant materials is always available to educators and learners. Materials must be made available both via the Internet and in physical form, through each participating country's education network.)
- h. How can community support be enlisted to improve the status of teachers, including salary and working conditions to attract and hold entrants to teaching?

- i. What funding and organisation can be put in place to ensure a lifelong teacher education and development program geared to meet the needs of steadily evolving education systems, themselves geared increasingly towards lifelong learning opportunities for a large segment, if not all, of a country's citizenry?

4. Managing transitions and educational innovations

One of the biggest challenges facing Sub-Saharan African countries relates to the problems for students transitioning from primary to lower secondary, lower secondary to upper secondary, and upper secondary to tertiary level institutions. At a time when primary school enrolments are like to increase, following the implementation of EFA, high repetitions and drop out rates, that presently characterise the system, are likely to plague the secondary education sub-system. These inefficiencies are likely to be very expensive to governments, where many students are likely to leave the system without a qualification.

Many secondary school students do not have sufficient effective information and guidance to enable them move on to the next stage of education or training. On the other hand as secondary education systems develop links with the local labour market and enterprises, the schools need to provide more information on the needs and existing prospects of the jobs available and possibilities of further education and training. During the last years of primary schooling and towards the middle of the secondary cycle students need information, coaching, study skills that will enable lifelong learning, career guidance and support for "learning how to learn" in order to make a successful transition that will have a significant impact on their future professional career development. These need to be available at school. They also need services that may be provided by local labour market suppliers, employers and union services.

The transition from the last years of the secondary cycle and the tertiary institutions is even more complex. This may necessitate institutionalised links between schools and industry, business companies, municipalities, other information

services and local enterprises on the one hand, and with tertiary institutions on the other. These transitions can be effective only when schools function in a realistic framework, when students make informed and rational choices of subjects at school and when better motivated and coached students invariably are successful whereby drop out and repetition rates are reduced. Most importantly when there are clearly defined, open and coherent learning pathways and proper qualification frameworks, transition processes become richer and more efficient mechanisms to improve equity and they provide the groundwork to effective lifelong learning attitudes.

To achieve these objectives, the following need to be considered:

- a. How can African countries improve the transition processes in times of considerable secondary expansion and severe financial constraints?
- b. Which support services should secondary schools provide to enable a more effective transition process?
- c. Which educational pathways should be created in the absence of promising experiences in other African countries that could be used as models?
- d. How would the adequate structures of new ways of teaching cope with the foreseeable increase in secondary schools intake and challenges posed by the new partnerships with out of school partners?
- e. What are the innovations to be introduced, the bridges to be anticipated and how to properly handle such reforms?
- f. How to integrate secondary education within the system that will allow drop outs at one time re-integrate the system at later stages?

5. The problems related to access, equity and quality

The success of the EFA programme is likely to exacerbate the problem of access to secondary education in more severe ways. The question to be answered is not whether African countries can afford secondary education to its people now but what they will do with increases as they occur. There are already large segments of

unserved and under-served populations for whom secondary education is only a dream. Access cannot be expanded unless there are major changes in the way secondary education is delivered today.

Equity is a major consideration touching on all aspects of reform. A key issue of this is gender equity. There are severe problems for girls in many African countries. These relate not only to access but also of opportunity to study a full range of subjects, including science and technology. Greater equity in the distribution of educational opportunities will enable the poor, the girls, the oppressed, the rural youth and the marginalised to capture not only a large share of the benefits of secondary education that will lead to greater upward social and economic mobility but also to make an overall contribution to an overall increase in the rate of social and economic growth.

The notion of access to education means that every child should be provided with the possibility of acquiring at school, the necessary knowledge to live and to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Access, when it also ensures the elimination of all inequalities that prevent children from going to school and keeping them there, should be a complement to a quality education. That is why particular attention should be paid to reduce all forms of inequalities and inequities due to gender, socio-economic status or any other types of marginalisation. Wars and situations where there are conflicts have an adverse impact on populations, particularly young people and small children, a special group that should be attended to in any kind of reform. What should be done to bring back into the mainstream all those who have been deprived for one reason or the other?

The concept of quality has many dimensions: the conditions and consequences of learning, the socio-economic and cultural relevance of the content of teaching, as well as the impact of the environment on the educational process. The achievement of quality depends on many factors, not only the adequacy of provision and the quality of teaching but also the development of a culture of evaluation, the readiness and capacity to test what is being achieved and to make adjustments and changes.

Finally, all these dimensions lead to the notion of internal and external efficiency of the system, with the resulting need to consider dropouts, the quality and quantity of the certificates awarded in relation to the needs of the country.

What innovations need to be introduced within the system so that these notions of access, equity and quality are integrated throughout? To answer this overarching question the following need to be considered:

- a. Are there cost-effective examples, new settings (e.g. situational learning) or alternative modes of delivery, such as distance education methods or flexible schooling or the use of mentors such as tertiary students, exist that can provide and expand access to good quality secondary education while reducing unit costs?
- b. How to improve equity in secondary education under sustainable financing scenarios?
- c. What incentives can African countries provide for private sector participation to increase in secondary education?
- d. Which interventions (e.g. scholarships, grants, school vouchers, matching the school calendar to the local economic cycles, food vouchers) are effective in which situations in order to expand access to secondary education to marginalised groups?
- e. What strategies can be used to change examination-oriented education into quality education?
- f. Can individual countries develop benchmarks of standard of achievement that is expected of students at successive stages of education?
- g. What alternative provision of education (such as community schools) can be explored for African countries?

VI. Conclusion

The above topics do not cover the whole gamut of secondary education that needs consideration. There are many other secondary education key challenges that this Workshop cannot consider as separate thematic studies, due to obvious time constraints. It is hoped that they will certainly be raised in the Workshop that is expected to provide organised and relevant information to educationists, policy-decision makers and researchers to enable them evolve the right policies in the context of the Dakar World Forum follow-up. The Workshop will enable participants to share the many valuable and best practices that already exist on the African continent and in the world at large. There are many secondary education systems that have already embarked on secondary education renewal and it is necessary to build on such examples, remembering that all systems are dynamic and constantly changing. The “road map” that will be charted out in the Workshop will thereby allow policy makers, practitioners and researchers to evolve guidelines and specific projects that can then be published, taking into account the current status, constraints, problems and needs of secondary and youth education in selected nations. Finally, the elaboration and publication of guidelines and general orientations for reforms in the secondary sub sector may lead to a concrete regional action plan and pilot projects in specific countries that will be submitted for approval and funding at the next MINEDAF conference to be held in December 2002.