Concluding Speech on
The Establishment and Institutionalization of EFA
Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment functions

On the occasion of the Sri Lanka – Maldives Joint Planning
Meeting for the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment and Mid-Term
Review

by

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Good morning to everybody!

And welcome to Honourable Minister of Education, Mr. Susil Premajayantha, and Additional Secretary of Education, Mr. Wijeratne, to the final day of the 5-day workshop of the strategic planning of the MDA in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Although it was actually only five days ago, it seems long ago that we began this workshop, because we have been engaged intensively on a very extensive strategic planning for the Mid-Decade Assessment of the education sector development. The participants have formulated a general strategy on assessment of progress in areas of national priorities, including the six areas in which the Member States of UN and the development partners had pledged their support, namely

1. early childhood care and education
2. inclusive primary education
3. essential skills and life skills
4. universal literacy
5. gender equality
6. quality of education

The EFA Coordinators have presented the draft plans formulated by the hard working participants in this workshop. The proposed assessment will measure national progress and identify the successes and, equally as important, the remaining challenges, the implementation gaps and the different impact on the target groups of the respective education goals. The main objective of the assessment is to provide the information essential for evidence-based and goal-oriented policy guidance, especially with regard to “reaching the un-reached.” To this end, the assessment will also measure and locate various degrees of successes and disparities in education achievement and the distribution of access to quality education and opportunities for self-improvement and development of individuals and communities spread across the spectrum of the society and geography of the respective countries. Such precise and policy-relevant information will enable the government and the education supporting partners to re-adjust and focus their strategies on the national education sector development programme in order to better meet the national targets by the year 2015.
For the immediate future, the assessment report will equip the government with an excellent evidence-based report and goal-oriented policy proposals at the coming regional and sub-regional Mid-Decade Assessment and Mid-Term Policy Review conferences as well as in other context, both national and international, such as the national medium and long-term development plans.

For the UN agencies, it is vitally important for their UN Common Country Assessment, on which the UN Development Assistance Framework is based. For the funding agencies supporting the national education sector development, it is equally important, as the assessment for progress review and strategic planning is the core function of the national monitoring and evaluation component of the ESD framework and programme.

I am very certain that it would be quite correct for me to say that the UN agencies, including UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank and the development partners are ready to support the Mid-Decade Assessment, not simply as one time event, but as part of the institutional capacity building in the strategic-
guidance functions of policy and programme monitoring, evaluation and assessment.

For example, already next month the UNESCO Institute for Statistics will be holding a regional workshop for education statisticians. The program includes training in education indicators and measures of disparities. It will be held in Islamabad. Please ensure you’re your relevant education statistician participates in this workshop, as part of the capacity building for the MDA and general MEA.

For the MDA and MEA to be successfully conducted in the immediate and medium-term perspectives, the proposed strategy needs your government’s authoritative endorsement and a directive on the implementation of the strategic plan submitted to the government, starting with the establishment of the secretariat with staff and budget needed to manage the implementation of the proposed Mid-Decade Assessment.

Thank you.

Now I call upon the representatives of the respective governments to comment on these proposals.