Speaking points
Launch of the 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report “Reaching the Marginalized” Friday, 25/06/10

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Opening Remarks

Good morning,

• Mme Sivika Mektavatchaikul (Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Thailand)
• Professor Kalaya Tingsabadh (Vice President of Chulalongkorn University)
• Mr. Gwang-Jo Kim (Director, UNESCO AP Regional Bureau for Education)

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pleasure to welcome all of you in this important occasion to launch the 2010 Education For All Global Monitoring Report, “Reaching the Marginalized”.

The timing of this report is timely and topical, because the 2010 Summit of the Millennium Development Goals will be held in September, whereby our progress towards reaching the Goals 2 and 8 will be reviewed and the importance of equity and reaching the marginalized highlighted.

Every child has a right to education, a fundamental human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of 1948 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A child’s right to enjoy quality learning opportunities should not be a privilege enjoyed by a few, based on background or circumstances; regardless of family wealth, ethnicity, gender, language or disability, all children have the right to enjoy opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential.
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Governments and families bear the duty to respect, protect and fulfill this basic right for all children.

The right to education is also inextricably linked to the realization of other fundamental human rights, and by extension, to the improvement of quality of life and well being of societies and nations. It is one of the best means to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Unfortunately, much more work remains until the goals of Education for All are realized in the East Asia and Pacific region. Despite significant progress in advancing the education agenda, pockets of disparities are not only high but persistent and growing in many countries. Overall access and quality improvements have benefited some, while excluding others, particularly poor and vulnerable children. For ex:

- In Vietnam, children from the poorest quatile are 40% less likely to reach Grade 9 than those from the wealthiest
- In Indonesia, rural children are 20% less likely to reach Grade 7 as are children living in urban areas, while in Timor Leste, this gap reaches nearly 40%.

We need to turn the tide. Without reaching the marginalized, Education for All and MDGs cannot be achieved. As we approach 2015, we need to improve and accelerate our efforts to address the root causes of marginalization. Barriers faced by the unreached are real but not impossible to tackle. Sustained political will and effective policies and programs based on critical evidence can steer us towards reaching the goals of Education for All.
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The Global Monitoring Report is a timely reminder of the urgency of the tasks ahead of us.
More children need to get into school and stay in schools and learn. Against the backdrop of
the global economic crisis, proactive policies by governments will be crucial to maintaining
momentum and protecting children- especially the poor and vulnerable- from potential
deprivations that can have irreversible impacts on their life chances.

Education for All is at the core of UNICEF’s work and we remain your strong partners in the
effort to realize this right for all children in the region. We applaud the progress countries are
making towards reaching the goals of EFA and MDGs and look forward to working towards our
common endeavor of reaching the marginalized and meeting the targets for 2015.