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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 4 July 2011 at 2.45 p.m.

President: Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia)

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The meeting was called to order at 2.50 p.m.

High-level segment (Agenda item 2) *(continued)*

Keynote address

1. **Mrs. Calmy-Rey** (President of the Swiss Confederation) said that globalization, while it had created considerable possibilities, had also produced risks of an unprecedented scope, including poverty, financial market instability, climate change, natural resource scarcity, migratory pressures and terrorism. The poorest countries were not deriving sufficient benefit from globalization, although they were contributing to it through the export of their natural resources. Recognizing that a quarter of the world's population was consuming three quarters of its resources, there were a number of questions to be answered: how to meet the needs of nearly 7 billion human beings, how to make development equitable, and where the debate over social justice was heading in the 21st century. In defining their policies and priorities, national leaders must broaden their view of the public good. The perspective of a "global community of destiny" or of a "global society of risk", currently taking shape, opened the way to new ways of thinking, which were becoming dispensable for negotiating rights and responsibilities in terms of global public goods.

2. Although the technologies, the know-how and the financial resources were at hand for overcoming global risks, the question for the present day, in the climate area, was whether it would be possible to bridge the gap between divergent interests and to create a common global identity. In an interconnected world, it would be best to pluralize the model of governance. Despite the progress made since the Rio Conference, no institution had won recognition as the guiding beacon for reorienting policy, and international governance remained fragmented and ineffective. What was needed, then, was an institution endowed with the required political authority, capable of responding more effectively to the demands for support from governments — those of emerging countries and developing countries, in particular — able to transform scientific knowledge into a basis for policymaking and to mobilize resources and then allocate them in a more coordinated way, and offering a political platform where governments and economic and social stakeholders could act effectively.

3. Seizing upon the privileged position of the Economic and Social Council for dealing with questions of sustainable development at the global level, Mrs. Calmy-Rey proposed that that body should evolve into a Sustainable Development Council and that one of its technical commissions — the Commission on Sustainable Development — should be given the role of fostering dialogue with nongovernment players and encouraging the creation of multiple stakeholder coalitions, an objective that could be attained by creating an executive committee. She also proposed that there should be a universal periodic review similar to that of the Human Rights Council, in order to reinforce international governance in the area of sustainability. Conducted by governments and based on the principle of cooperation, that peer review would guarantee equal treatment for all countries. Another way of giving greater effectiveness to the action of the Economic and Social Council would be to encourage states that were candidates for a seat on the council to commit themselves in advance to pursue a number of concrete objectives during their mandate. Such solutions would guarantee the coherence and coordination that were currently lacking, and would help to strengthen governance, to lend new dynamism, and to integrate economic, social and environmental policies more thoroughly.

The meeting was suspended at 3.05 p.m., and reconvened at 3.10 p.m.

Annual ministerial review

Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education (Agenda item 2 (b)) *(continued)*

Special face-to-face debate on education, human rights and conflict

4. **Mrs. Bokova** (Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO) spoke of the consequences of armed conflicts on education and of the "hidden crisis" — the theme of the 2011 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report — that was afflicting the world: 28 million children were out of school in countries gripped by conflicts, schools were often the target of attacks, and children and adolescents were the victims of rape and other sexual violence. The time had come for the international community to take firmer

measures to prevent such acts and to guarantee safe and secure access to education for children and youth.

5. A number of international instruments had enshrined education as a universal human right, and various additional protocols contained specific, legally binding provisions relating to children and their right to education. Yet each day, in dozens of countries, these provisions were being flouted. The very first obligation was to protect the right to education in situations of conflict and to combat gender discrimination. To supervise enforcement, there must be a reliable system for gathering information on attacks against pupils, schools and teachers. UNESCO had played its role in this regard, with publication of its studies on "Education under Attack" and its 2011 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report.

6. The second obligation was to make education a force for peace. Education was essential for restoring peace, and it must occupy a prominent place not only in reconciliation efforts but also in emergency interventions, along with psychosocial support for teachers and pupils. UNESCO was working on this with real determination, conducting programmes in Afghanistan (600,000 pupils in 18 provinces), in Iraq (training trainers, reorganizing higher education, promoting literacy), in Jordan, in the Syrian Arab Republic, in Lebanon, in the West Bank and in Gaza (schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

7. Lastly, something needed to be done about the fact that the education sector was currently receiving only 2 per cent of humanitarian aid. The case of South Sudan, on the eve of independence, was instructive: the primary school enrolment rate there was the lowest in the world, and the chances of a child's dying at birth were greater than those of its completing school. Yet it was in the schools that this country would have to win recognition as a state, and in the minds of its boys and girls that it would have to develop. A quality education based on the universal culture of human rights was the best means for breaking the cycle of violence and intolerance. Mrs. Bokova hoped that the debate would recognize the key place of education in the acquisition of independence, the building of a culture of human rights, and the promotion of democracy.

8. **Mr. Solheim** (Minister of Environment and Development Cooperation of Norway) said that peace

was the prerequisite for giving effect to every child's right to a quality education and therefore priority must be given to preventing conflicts and to fostering dialogue, even with terrorists and rebels, and everything must be done to preserve education in situations of armed conflict and violence. Declaring himself a confirmed optimist, Mr. Solheim cited Burundi, Mozambique and Rwanda as encouraging examples.

The meeting was suspended at 3.32 p.m. and reconvened at 3.37 p.m.

9. **Mrs. Foulkes** (BBC correspondent in Geneva) presented a short film on the impact of conflict on education, and then moderated a question-and-answer session with a panel that included Mrs. Jahangir, Laureate of 2010/UNESCO Bilbao Prize and President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan, Mrs. Wang, Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children Norway and Chair of the Rewrite the Future Campaign, and Mr. Diouf, Leitner Family Professor of African Studies and Director of the Institute for African Studies, Columbia University, as well as the President, acting in his expert capacity. Participants first responded to questions from the moderator, and then to those from representatives of Mexico, Kenya, Greece and UNRWA, as well as those from the public, submitted by Internet.

10. Essentially, speakers stressed the need to provide quality education even at times of conflict, to combat discrimination against girls, to prevent the "brain drain", and to ensure that people could participate in all these activities.

National voluntary presentations

Germany (E/2011/97)

11. **Mrs. Kopp** (Germany) explains that German development policy was contributing to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All objectives. She said that support for education was one of the pillars of German development cooperation policy. As a key factor of development in all fields, education was essential to achieving the MDG. A proper education would also contribute to reducing poverty, especially in developing countries. For example, each year of additional study or training meant a 10 per cent increase in average income. A country's sustainable development, then, depended to a

large extent on its capacity to support a quality education system to which all citizens had access under conditions of equity.

12. Yet many countries, and not only developing countries, were far from achieving the Education for All objectives and the Millennium Development Goals. Some 67 million children around the world were not attending school: nearly half of these children lived in Africa, and a quarter in South Asia and in Western Asia, while 759 million adults were illiterate. In developing countries, only a quarter of the population had such basic skills as reading and writing, even where the proportion of the population that had completed school was higher. Germany was working to remedy the inadequate quality of education and the lack of teacher training in the context of development cooperation. In many countries the gaps in the education system included inadequate resources and lack of infrastructure. Moreover, in many countries girls were the victim of discrimination in access to education. Sometimes whole population groups — ethnic or religious minorities, working children, persons with disabilities, in particular — were denied education. It was important to address the situation of these excluded groups, which were desperately in need of outside assistance.

13. In the context of its assistance to emerging countries and developing countries, Germany was attempting to promote a global approach to education, one that would meet needs of the primary, secondary and higher education levels as well as in vocational training and adult education, the objective being to ensure that all people could access quality education throughout their lives. To this end, the Federal Ministry for economic cooperation and development had designed an education strategy and, in cooperation with its partners, had set 10 objectives for giving sustainable support to education in emerging countries and developing countries and for helping achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

14. First, Germany would increase the financial resources devoted to education around the world. In 2010, it had begun with a 10 per cent increase in bilateral education assistance allocations. It would be boosting its efforts in Africa, in particular, to which it was already devoting around 50 per cent of its official development assistance earmarked for education, the objective being to double the amount of bilateral funding in this sector by 2013. Second, Germany

would seek to provide support at all levels of instruction and to strengthen education systems as a whole. It also intended to take an active role in the work of multilateral organizations and the European Union in pursuit of their education commitments. Third, Germany hoped to improve the quality of elementary education and to make it more accessible. Here, the stress was on gender equality, integration of underprivileged groups, and teacher training. It was also important to strengthen the Education for All. Fast-Track Initiative. Germany considered in this regard that particular attention should be paid to fragile states and states in situations of conflict, and it was earmarking funds for a programme in Africa that would provide support to partner countries requesting financing under this initiative. Fourth, Germany, which stood first among donors in technical and vocational education, would be increasing its aid still further in this area. It would be working to institute new partnerships between the public and private sectors and would cooperate with private sector players in order to train field workers in such areas as renewable energy and natural resources. Fifth, in order to halt the wastage of human potential in partner countries and put an end to the brain drain, Germany would seek to develop higher education and provide greater support to persons returning to higher education. Sixth, it would be experimenting with new development instruments and innovative forms of cooperation. Seventh, it would do more to associate the full range of stakeholders. Governments, civil society and the private sector should collaborate to offer a range of education possibilities that were based on needs and could respond to them effectively. Eighth, Germany would work more closely with the private sector to train specialists and encourage businesses to offer training slots. Ninth, Germany intended to make its education efforts more effective. Tenth, Germany would strive to sensitize the public to the need to support education in developing countries and to encourage greater involvement by civil society in this regard.

15. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) said that the education policies of the German government had been a source of inspiration for many countries for more than half a century, especially when it came to adapting classical or vocational education to the needs of the labour market. The success of Germany's education policy could explain in part the importance of education in its external cooperation programmes, and

it was in this field that its bilateral cooperation with Guatemala was most important. The programmes underway in this cooperative framework were designed in particular to guarantee gender equality in access to the education system, to promote an active role for parents, and to improve the quality of basic education. The concrete results achieved in Guatemala confirmed that German cooperation policy in the education sector was built on solid foundations.

16. Mr. Rosenthal was hoping for further details from Germany on its position with respect to strengthening education systems, not only at the elementary level, of which there was much discussion in the thematic presentation, but also at the secondary level. He also asked for details on coordination between the German government's bilateral cooperation and the multilateral cooperation of the European Union, in particular with the Central American Integration System, to which Guatemala was party; on the way in which Germany organized its cooperation with other countries in the context of the G-8, in particular with Canada under the joint programme in Guatemala; and on the provisions in the cooperation programmes for guaranteeing equal education coverage for girls and boys.

17. **Mrs. Kopp** (Germany) stressed the importance paid to the quality of basic education and the adequate offer of programmes and facilities when considering strategies for higher education. Concerning cooperation with the European Union, Germany was constantly exchanging ideas and programmes with the EU in the search for partners and was preparing joint projects as part of a coherent EU strategy in education. With respect to education for girls, who accounted for 54 per cent of children not in school, human rights issues were systematically raised from the outset of negotiations with governments. Gender equality programmes placed the emphasis not only on girls' initial access to school but on their retention in the system, so that they could receive a full education.

18. **Mrs. Jahr de Guerrero** (Germany) said that Canada was a long-standing partner of Germany on education matters within the G-8, where the two countries were pursuing joint efforts to give a greater place to education, particularly in the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative, and also within the G-20.

19. **Mrs. Bratten** (Norway) supported Germany in making the quality of education a priority, without downplaying the importance of education for all, which

would mean developing a sufficient body of qualified teachers, a matter on which Norway and Germany were cooperating closely. Norway fully subscribed to Germany's holistic view of education, covering all levels from preschool to higher education, and she welcomed the importance attached to achieving the goal of primary education for all. Yet, according to the national report presented by Germany (E./2011/97), aid to primary education accounted for only 8.6 per cent of bilateral education ODA, and vocational education and training only 6.1 per cent. In his report on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education (E./2011/83), the Secretary-General had noted the growing importance of higher education in ODA priorities, and was concerned at the sharp reduction in ODA devoted to basic education, which could compromise the results achieved to date. Mrs. Bratten wondered if, in this context, Germany was planning to review the distribution of its contributions to the different subsectors of education, in the context of its new education strategy.

20. Mrs. Bratten also asked for further details on Germany's plans for education in the least-developed countries and in fragile states or those in conflict, especially in terms of ensuring the quality and relevance of instruction in such contexts. Welcoming the importance that Germany attached to vocational education in its development programmes, she wanted to know more about how Germany was adapting its education model to countries where the economy was primarily informal, where there was no tradition of apprenticeship or any solid links between teaching institutions and the labour market, and where few businesses were in a position to hire large numbers of young trainees or apprentices.

21. **Mrs. Kopp** (Germany) stressed the importance that her country was giving to close bilateral coordination with the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative, with the launch of a regional capacity building programme in Africa. Education was a priority for German cooperation, especially in fragile countries. With respect to the distribution of aid in the education field, Mrs. Kopp explained that her country favoured a holistic concept of education focused on lifelong learning and that its aid programmes were financed accordingly. As to vocational training, there were not enough companies offering training positions in many countries, hence the importance that Germany gave to

flexible strategies adapted to each situation, allowing on one hand for the establishment of technical institutions for theoretical training and, on the other hand, the search for private sector partners and firms in the country that could provide practical training.

22. **Mr. Sarwar** (Pakistan) thanked Germany for its cooperation in education, which was helping many countries, including Pakistan, to improve their prospects in this area. He asked whether Germany was planning to boost the importance of vocational education in its cooperation programmes for the benefit of those many developing countries that were encountered difficulties in adapting their education systems to rapidly evolving labour market needs.

23. **Mr. Dansinghani** (Mauritius) welcomed Germany's consideration of early childhood issues, particularly those concerning children with special needs, which were too often overlooked. He indicated his concerns about technical and vocational education, given the low esteem in which these branches were held by much of the public in developing countries, compared to the classical streams. He also wondered what Germany thought about reconciling the two main strategies adopted by developed countries with respect to foreign students trained in their institutions: on one hand, graduates were encouraged to return to their country of training after a stint in their own country (according to the notion of "circular migration", as was the case in the United States) and, on the other hand, they were urged to return to their home country in order to contribute to its development, the latter approach being favoured in particular by Germany. Finally, Mr. Dansinghani praised Germany's willingness to extend its aid programmes to all developing countries, including emerging countries, many of which found themselves cut off from aid by certain partners as soon as their situation improved.

24. **Mrs. Blakely** (New Future Foundation), noting Germany's keen interest in future generations and education, asked whether partnerships had been created with communities, such as the community of Harlem in the United States, in the context of promoting education for all young people.

25. **Mrs. Ndong-Jatta** (UNESCO) thanked Germany for preparing a well thought out strategy and, noting that it had declared its intention to collaborate with multilateral organizations through the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative, asked how Germany intended

to intensify its cooperation with UNESCO, especially in Africa, in pursuit of its many initiatives at integration and regional cooperation in technical and vocational education.

26. **Mrs. Jahr de Guerrero** (Germany) indicated that Pakistan was one of the principal countries with which Germany was cooperating in education. The global approach adopted by Germany made it possible to strengthen the existing links between primary education, technical and vocational education and higher education. It was important that civil society organizations should contribute to the development of education, including primary education, by participating in programmes and projects and working with public partners. On this point, there were programmes to finance cooperation between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Germany and in Pakistan and other countries and for compiling information on the needs generated by evolving markets. Such information was then fed into the programmes in place.

27. **Mrs. Kopp** (Germany) confirmed the importance of taking account of certain children's special needs and to do so early, through suitable preschool education. It was also essential to offer special training to teachers, to sensitize them to the existence of such needs. She noted that, if class sizes were kept as small as possible, greater attention could be paid to children with special needs.

28. Moreover, it was true that technical training was undervalued. The lessons of experience in industrialized countries showed the need to sensitize the general public to the equal importance of all types of education.

29. As to measures that might be taken to encourage skilled individuals to return to their home country and contribute to its development, Mrs. Kopp stressed the need to support these people from the outset, by offering them employment possibilities. Economic cooperation with developing countries should serve as the framework for establishing a private sector that would guarantee jobs geared to the professional qualifications of young people. It was also important to promote good governance in the countries concerned.

30. In response to the question from the representative of the New Future Foundation, Mrs. Kopp noted that the United States of America was not covered by development strategies, but she

recognized that questions concerning direct cooperation between communities that faced similar problems in different countries, including industrialized countries, had yet to be dealt with. She encouraged the governments of advanced countries to take an interest in this matter.

31. **Mr. Bell** (CRED) wanted to know whether courses in civics and human rights were being offered in primary and secondary education in most countries, and asked for information on German experience in this area.

32. **Mrs. Kopp** (Germany) recognized that it would be useful to integrate courses on “soft” skills into school programmes, but she was persuaded that this task was one for the governments of the developing countries concerned. In that context, the role of Germany would be to provide advice to countries.

33. **Mrs. Jahr de Guerrero** (Germany) indicated that Germany was the fourth largest contributor to UNESCO and was cooperating in efforts in its four fields of action, including education. She also noted that her country was contributing actively to preparation of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report; it was financing meetings and conferences for preparing the 2012 report; it was one of the partners financing the EFA Task Force on Teachers; it was collaborating with UNESCO in technical and vocational education, through UNESCO-UNEVOC (Bonn) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL, Hamburg); it was working with the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA); and it was collaborating with various organizations and institutions. Lastly, Germany was of course cooperating with UNESCO in the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.