



Association pour  
le développement  
de l'éducation en Afrique (ADEA)



THE WORLD BANK



Ministry  
of Basic Education  
Mali

## Press release

### The Bamako goal: an end to exclusion from access to education for financial reasons

**Bamako, June 21, 2007** – “Mali will reach the Millennium Goals on girls’ education by 2015”, the Malian Prime Minister, Ousmane Issoufi Maïga, predicted, opening the policy meeting of the “International Conference on School Fee Abolition: Planning for Quality and Financial Sustainability” organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), UNICEF and the World Bank, on Thursday, June 21 in Bamako, Mali.

Addressing nearly 200 participants composed of national delegations from 23 countries, experts and decision-makers representing intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, development cooperation agencies, financial institutions and civil society organizations, Mr. Maïga pointed out that the African nations have, since their independence, “made education a central concern” and have “made the school an absolute priority in economic, social and cultural development.”

He mentioned as an example, his own country, which devotes on average 30% of its annual national budget to education. He indicated that, in the framework of the Ten-year Program on the Development of Education, a global investment of 562.4 billion CFA francs will have been granted for developing the Malian education system at all levels, between 2006 and 2008.

Citing the goals of the conference whose work began on June 19, the Prime Minister said: “It is not only a question of issuing decrees to eliminate school fees. There must be, above all, rigorous planning of educational expenditures based on current indicators and the evaluation of the deficits created by the abolition of school fees. This is what is necessary to maintain or develop the internal balance of the education system.”

Earlier, Mr. Mamadou Ndoye, the Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), presented a summary of the technical meeting that preceded and prepared the policy meeting. Concerning the 77 million children excluded from access to education, he observed, “the code of ethics that are the basis for the universality and effectiveness of the right to education as a fundamental human right, and therefore inseparable from human dignity, exemplifies the schooling of poor children as a categorical imperative.” He recalled that the essential goal of abolishing school fees “is to create a context in which no child will be excluded from access to education for financial reasons.”

Mr. Ndoye then shared with the audience the particularly instructive messages that came out of the work of the delegates and experts. In the first place, he said, the process of abolishing school fees is above all the expression of a strong political determination that could not be reduced to simply an announcement for the media but is conveyed by the formulation of a defined policy, the effective launching of reforms and the negotiation of sizeable budgets necessary for implementation.

The second message is that the strength of political determination must be based on rigorous planning that defines feasible goals in the short, medium and long terms, as well as the pace and scope of actions based both on an accurate estimation of the needs to be met and the resources to be mobilized. He stressed a requirement that was expressed: the necessary balance between planning and action “so that the obsession to achieve the first does not provoke the paralysis of the second.”

The third message, the ADEA’s Executive Secretary continued, forcefully asserts that broad policy dialogue is a decisive factor for success. He cited discussions with the Minister of Finance and the Plan and the development partners, with other ministers, with the principal actors in education,



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decentralized dialogue and dialogue for social support.

On a note of confidence and optimism, Mr. Ndoye concluded with the results anticipated from the reflections of the policy meeting: A clear statement of the strategies of the abolition of school fees, the creation or strengthening of efficient internal and external partnerships favorable to decisive agreements and support; working plans for exchange and learning between countries and the reinforcement of South-South cooperation.

The conference, which ends on Friday, June 22 should terminate with a clearer vision of prospects for progress in the elimination of financial obstacles to Education for All. It was attended by delegations from the following 23 countries: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Papua-New Guinea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Togo, Yemen and Zambia.

**Bamako, June 21, 2007**

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