

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION AT THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

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Abstract

International co-operation among governmental and non-governmental, regional and interregional organizations can play a very important role in supporting the move towards inclusive schools. Based on past experience in this area, international organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental as well as bilateral donor agencies, could consider joining forces in implementing the following strategic approaches. Technical assistance should be directed to strategic fields of intervention with a multiplier effect, especially in developing countries. One important task for international co-operation is to support the launching of pilot projects aimed at trying out new approaches and at capacity building.



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Introduction

The organization of regional partnerships or partnership among countries with similar approaches in special needs education could result in the planning of joint activities under the auspices of existing regional or other co-operative mechanisms. Such activities should be designed to take advantage of economies of scale, to draw upon the experience of participating countries, and to further the development of national capabilities.

A priority mission incumbent upon international organizations is to facilitate exchange of data, information and results of pilot programmes in special needs education between countries and regions. Collection of internationally comparable indicators of progress in inclusion in education and employment should become a part of the worldwide database on education. Focal points might be established in sub-regional centres in order to facilitate information exchanges. Existing structures at the regional and international levels should be strengthened and their activities extended to such fields as policies, programming, training of personnel and evaluation.

A high percentage of disability is the direct result of lack of information, poverty and low health standards. As the worldwide prevalence of disabilities is increasing, particularly in the developing countries, there should be joint international action in close collaboration with national efforts to prevent the causes of disability through education which, in turn, would

reduce the incidence and prevalence of disabilities, thereby further reducing the demands on the limited financial and human resources of a country.

International and technical assistance to special needs education derives from numerous sources. It is, therefore, essential to ensure coherence and complementarity among organizations of the United Nations system and other agencies lending assistance in this area.

International co-operation should support advanced training seminars for educational managers and other specialists at the regional level and foster co-operation between university departments and training institutions in different countries for conducting comparative studies as well as for the publication of reference documents and instructional materials.

International co-operation should assist in the development of regional and international associations of professionals concerned with the enhancement of special needs education and should support the creation and dissemination of newsletters or journals as well as the holding of regional meetings and conferences.

International and regional meetings covering issues related to education should ensure that special educational needs are addressed as an integral part of the debate and not as a separate issue. As a concrete example, the issue of special needs education should be put on the agenda of regional ministerial conferences organized by UNESCO and other intergovernmental bodies.

International technical co-operation and funding agencies involved in support and development of Education for All initiatives should ensure that special needs education is an integral part of all development projects. 84. International co-ordination should exist to support universal accessibility specifications in communication technology underpinning the emerging information infrastructure.

Conclusion:

This Framework for Action was adopted by acclamation after discussion and amendment in the Closing Session of the Conference on 10 June 1994. It is intended to guide Member States and governmental and non-governmental organizations in implementing the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy, and Practice in Special Needs Education. Inclusive education values diversity and the unique contributions to national and international.

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