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G-8 Ministerial Meeting on Education, Moscow, 1-2 June 2006

The Ministers of Education of the G-8 met in Moscow on 1-2 June 2006 to confirm their commitment to cooperation in education at all levels in the 21st century.

1. The 21st century is marked by rapid social and economic change, brought about largely by advances in science and technology. In today's world, knowledge of sciences, social sciences and humanities and its effective application are important assets for personal fulfillment, social cohesion and socio-economic development, as well as for increasing competitiveness and improving the quality of life. Ministers emphasized the importance of equitable access to quality education at all levels, underlining that excellence and equity should be mutually reinforcing.
2. Ministers affirmed their commitment to helping to shape innovative societies through the provision of solid education and training foundations and investing significantly in research, people, and skills. Ministers committed to encouraging policy environments that favor innovation; promoting co-operation between public and private sectors; increasing exchanges in the science and technology fields; and continuing to develop flexible and effective lifelong learning systems.
3. Ministers agreed that education, skill development and the generation of new ideas are keys to human development, economic growth and market productivity. Education is critically important for creating an inclusive society. It underpins civil society, sustains and enriches cultures, builds mutual respect and understanding and has a crucial role to play in helping all people to adapt to change. Ministers agreed that by promoting social cohesion, the rule of law and justice, as well as civic engagement, education helps all people maximize their individual potential and participation in a knowledge-based society.
4. Ministers recognized that education is a public good. In this context, the private sector can play an important role in the development of modern education systems under the condition of accountable and transparent legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. These frameworks foster supportive and consistent policies which offer strong protection of intellectual property rights, provide incentives for investment and promote regulatory policies that encourage innovation.
5. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to improving all aspects of the quality of education. They underlined the need for responsive and accountable systems of governance to underpin high-quality education systems that can meet the needs of society and the economy. Improving the quality of education also results in better use of public resources.
6. Ministers underlined the importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for advancing quality education. They reaffirmed their commitment to promoting the more effective use of ICTs in education, in accordance with the G8 Okinawa Communiqué on the Global Information Society and the Tunis Commitment of the World Summit on the Information Society.
7. Ministers stressed that professional education, including university and other higher education and training, plays a key role in innovative societies. It must be able to adjust rapidly to the changing demands of society and the labor market.
8. Ministers recognized that the internationalization of education is a reality. They agreed to promote innovative cross-border education delivery with the aim of increasing the international understanding, transparency and portability of qualifications and intensifying cooperation on quality assurance and accreditation.
9. Ministers emphasized the importance of international educational mobility, whether through formal exchanges or voluntary mobility. Ministers encouraged wider exchanges and interactions at all levels of education and training.
10. Ministers agreed that teachers should be highly qualified, and their competences should meet the requirements of innovative and inclusive societies. All teachers should provide students with quality instruction and an understanding of civic values. Making teaching an attractive career choice and updating teachers' knowledge and skills are challenges that need to be addressed vigorously.

11. Ministers underlined the need to develop comprehensive systems of lifelong learning, from early childhood through adulthood. They recognized the importance of vocational training for young women and men. Lifelong learning strengthens linkages between learning, enterprise training and the labor market in order to keep every person's knowledge and skills current.
12. Ministers recognized that education systems should focus on developing intellectual capacity, not only in the mastery of content but also in processing, adapting and applying existing information, and, most importantly, in creating new knowledge.
13. Ministers agreed that high standards in mathematics, science, technology and foreign languages provide an important foundation for societies that embrace innovation. They strongly supported sharing research-based practices.
14. Ministers underlined that education at all levels should promote social and intercultural skills, and understanding of and respect for the values and the history of other cultures and societies.
15. Ministers underlined that it is also crucial to promote better understanding of qualifications earned through informal and non-formal learning. They encouraged the promotion of information sharing, the understanding of different national academic practices and traditions, and the appreciation of labor-market-driven mechanisms for recognition of qualifications.
16. Ministers noted that the more rapid integration of immigrants and migrants into the host nation's society can be facilitated by improving mutual understanding of foreign qualifications, and the acquisition of linguistic and intercultural competences. Immigrants' and migrants' contribution to society will be maximized if they can pursue occupations commensurate with their education, skill and experience. At the same time, employers will gain access to a broader pool of talent.
17. Ministers reaffirmed their countries' commitment to support achieving the Millennium Development Goals of universal primary completion and gender equality at all levels of education, and to helping countries to achieve the goals of the Education for All (EFA) agenda. This includes cross-sector approaches, as well as South-South and triangular modalities of cooperation (North-South-South).
18. Ministers affirmed their support for UNESCO's leadership in coordinating action to achieve EFA goals. They agreed to continued support of the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and reiterated the Gleneagles Commitment to help FTI-endorsed countries to develop sustainable capacity and identify the resources necessary to pursue their sustainable educational strategies.

Recognizing the common challenges and opportunities that countries face in the 21st century, Ministers reaffirmed the importance of policy dialogue and the sharing of experience and expertise internationally. This will help all countries build effective, innovative and inclusive education systems that can allow people to fulfill their potential, to live in and contribute to a global society, and to work in a global economy.

G8 Ministers of Education appreciated the participation of representatives from Brazil, China, India, Kazakhstan, Mexico, South Africa, the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank in their discussions.

 [print page](#)

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