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ISSUES PAPER

BASIC EDUCATION IN THE PACIFIC:

FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY

The attached paper, prepared by the Forum Secretariat, summaries all the background papers for the meeting and brings together their conclusions as recommendations for consideration by Ministers. It will be referred to during all meeting sessions.

ISSUES PAPER

BASIC EDUCATION IN THE PACIFIC:
FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY

PURPOSE

This paper summarises the issues raised in, and recommendations arising from, the background papers for the Forum Education Ministers meeting.

2.   The context of this meeting is addressed first, through the mandate endorsed by Forum Leaders at Palau in November 1999, a discussion of the development environment and of the challenges facing the region in developing a basic education policy that will meet the national priorities and needs of Forum Island countries.

3.   The sections that follow after the first refer specifically to the two substantive Sessions of the Education Ministers Meeting, during which the key background papers are considered. These sections outline some strategies that could improve current provision of basic education and provide the full list of recommendations arising from the various papers before Ministers.

CONTEXT AND MANDATE

4.   Basic education should be viewed as the fundamental building block for society. It lays the foundation for either a vocational calling or for pursuing education to higher levels - the critical decision that is made by people in their mid teens - as well as life-long learning. If this foundation is weak, then livelihoods are more difficult to pursue or students struggle in the higher reaches of education. However, the impact of basic education goes beyond this. Through the teaching of health, culture, governance, geography and so on it can generate the broader life skills that lead to social cohesion which, when combined with an enhancing of employment opportunities, creates a higher level of personal and social security.

5.   The purpose of this meeting is to discuss basic education frameworks and strategies that will deliver the highest possible quality of basic education to the peoples of the Pacific through addressing the delivery of education services and how this might be best resourced.

Mandate

6.   The primary Vision for the Forum arises from the Leaders meeting in Madang in 1995, which focussed on the theme of *"Securing Development Beyond 2000"*, and adopted, for the 25 years to 2020, a Forum Vision Statement for enhancing regional cooperation (see Annex 1).

7.   This was intended to significantly strengthen the region's capacity to adapt to a rapidly changing international and regional environment. A number of national policy measures and regionally based activities which would contribute to the vision were also adopted, including endorsement of the preparation of a regional strategy designed to improve aid management and regional cooperation.

8.   In-country consultations carried out as part of the resultant Regional Strategy process confirmed that improvement in the quality of life is the key goal for Members, with enhanced economic growth as the fundamental basis for achieving this. While bearing in mind the differences in conditions of PICs and their struggle to achieve the right balance between growth, equity and environmental sustainability, the development goal for the Regional Strategy is:

> ***"Sustainable Economic Growth Leading to Improvements in the Quality of Life for the Peoples of the Pacific Islands"***

9.   The Regional Strategy is given effect by addressing constraints through ten key sector strategies, being: Good Governance, Education, Transport & Communication, Energy, Land Resources Management, Marine Resources Management, Economic Sector Development (Private Sector Development and Tourism Development), Health and Population, Water Supply and Sanitation, and Environmental Sustainability. In respect of education, the aims and strategies (see also Annex 2) are:

> "... to enhance productive capacities and provides a means to address the lack of an enabling environment as it relates to the inadequate skills base. Attention should be paid to:
>
> - developing alternative strategies to improve resourcing of education, including partnerships with NGOs, community-based organisations and the private sector in the financing and delivery of education.
>
> - rationalising investment in educational infrastructure to avoid proliferation of poorly used and serviced primary schools and the spread of expensive post-secondary institutions through a low population region.
>
> - Using distance education to overcome the isolation and scattered nature of the region, including building on existing initiatives such as those of USP and adapting new technologies to the needs of the region."

10.   Implementation of the economic and development strategies to give effect to the Leaders' vision has largely fallen to the Forum Economic Ministers, meeting annually since 1997. Economic Ministers have taken a holistic approach, identifying factors that might constrain the sustainable development of the Pacific region, but then asking that appropriate Ministers deal with specific issues. This has occurred in respect of trade, aviation, communication, and now education.

11.   Education issues were specifically considered by Economic Ministers at their meeting in Apia, Samoa in 1999. As a result of the Economic Ministers meetings and the *Forum Economic Action Plan : 1999 Review*, the Forum Island Leaders, at Palau in November 1999, agreed:

> "13.   ….. to an ad-hoc meeting of Forum Ministers of Education to consider the results of the work that Forum Economic Ministers have commissioned to be undertaken in the area of human resources development."

12.   In coming to this decision Forum Leaders had reviewed the deliberations of Economic Ministers in 1999, who had reported to Forum that:

"26.   …… there is a need to ensure that priorities are set such that economic and social development and our other strategic objectives will be effectively targeted. One such universal objective is the development of human resources in support of sustainable economic development. This requires, in turn, a refocusing of formal and informal education activities to better support the private sectors' needs through widening employment opportunities.

27.   Accordingly, we have reviewed the current status and situation of both formal and informal education throughout the region, and have considered priorities for human resource development that best meet the regions' strategic development objectives. We agree that:

(i)   high priority be given to education in planning and budgeting;

(ii)   increased emphasis is required on the foundation of training and education at the level of basic formal education.

28.   We also consider that continuing efforts are required to bolster human resource development efforts and to this end direct the Secretariat to identify and to work with CROP and other relevant agencies:

(i)   to undertake further research in the delivery of basic level education in forum countries and define the scope for involving the private sector (including civil society and non-government organisations) in the delivery of formal and non-formal education;

(ii)   to assist with the development of national human resource development and education strategic planning.

29.   We agree to convening an ad hoc meeting of Forum Ministers of Education and that this meeting consider the results of the work that we have directed be undertaken in the area of human resource development."

Overview of Issues

13.   A primary concern across the region is how to better meet the needs and aspirations of the upcoming generation. The UNDP notes that 20% of the region's population is aged between 15 to 24 years – a total of 1.4 million, which is expected to rise by a further 300,000 by the year 2010. Many school leavers find they have inadequate or inappropriate skills for the few waged jobs that are available, for agricultural work or for other types of livelihood. Most lack opportunities to upgrade their skills because too few non-formal training programmes are available.

14.   Despite these needs the situation of education in the Pacific, while varying from country to country, is generally weak and deteriorating:
- Literacy rates, while statistically high, have been found to be suspect, and the Melanesian countries lag behind other Pacific island countries in terms of adult literacy and mean years of schooling.
- Though school enrolment rates are generally high, recent regional tests show relatively low levels of achievement at the primary level in language, computation and scientific skills. A large proportion of primary school leavers (up to 40%) are at risk of not continuing their schooling.

- At the secondary level, the evidence is that standards are well below those of the Pacific Rim countries. Many Pacific islanders who go overseas for senior secondary or tertiary study have to undergo preparatory work before embarking on their courses of study - even so, the failure rates are high.
- Rapid population growth has led to increased pressure to expand education systems. This has contributed to severe teacher and teaching material shortages, especially at primary level.
- The poor quality of educational outputs reflects the problems of access by remote regions and/or islands and by certain sections of the population .

15.   A significant factor is the weakness in basic education, which leads to wastage at the secondary and tertiary levels and at training. The basics of literacy, science, mathematics and ethics have to be learned or inculcated in young people if they are to be productive and responsive to new opportunities at the later stage. Evidence also points to a clear correlation between strong basic education on one hand and improvements in technical skills uptake, in work and social adaptation, and in other social indicators of better health, nutrition and reduced fertility.

16.   In this context it is unfortunate that the current financing of education in the Pacific tends to be weighted towards secondary and post-secondary education at the expense of basic education (most Forum Island Countries spend less than 50% of total educational expenditure on primary education, some spending as little as 20 - 30%).

Cultural and Legal Context

17.   Education will influence the kind of society Pacific peoples create for themselves. The vision Pacific nations have for their peoples is partly defined by their membership in the international community, but a large measure also comes from their own unique histories and cultural heritages as well as from the development challenges they are facing.

18.   Examination of national constitutions and strategic planning documents show that all Pacific governments have, by-and-large, adopted the principles agreed to under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN instruments, under which the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, equality under the law, and social justice are guaranteed.

19.   These rights and freedoms presuppose, however, not only certain conditions, such as political stability and national security, economic prosperity and socio-cultural cohesiveness but specific institutions and structures and value systems. Pacific nations are today, for instance, aspiring not only to good governance, transparency and accountability in the political sphere, but to achieve this within a democratic framework, in which the rights and freedoms of the individual are paramount.

20.   However, Pacific countries, with their multitude of cultures, ethnic groups, and languages, have evolved over the centuries their own political, economic, cultural and social systems, which have given them their unique characteristics and identities. These are important for social cohesion but nonetheless need to be melded in with the adopted values and institutions of modern times. It is this combination that will shape the kinds of societies Pacific peoples build for themselves.

21.   Nonetheless, the attempts by Pacific nations and their peoples to achieve balance between becoming part of the international community and globalisation and the continuing maintenance and enhancement of their own distinctive cultures and identities have thrown up a number of common challenges. How Pacific nations manage these challenges and their success will contribute to the shaping of their national and collective vision for their future.

Socio-Economic Context

22.   During the 1990s dramatic changes occurred within the Pacific, stimulated by long-term international and regional trends, such as globalisation, deteriorating terms of trade, rising external debt and unsustainable development policies, and by more short-term developments such as the financial crisis in Asia. The security and stability of several Pacific Island countries consequently declined, marked by growing unemployment, poverty, social disintegration and widening income differentials.

23.   The overarching issue facing the Pacific islands is globalisation. This is not a new phenomenon – even at independence Pacific island countries had strong global connections through reliance on imports, their exporting activities and movement of persons. Since then these global interactions have intensified – consumption of imports has increased with incomes, the range of exports has widened, including into services such as tourism and offshore financial centres, international telecommunications has expanded and entertainment services from the rest of the world (film, video, music, among others) has become more popular, labour services have expanded and migration flows have increased (with an attendant rise in the importance of remittance flows).

24.   Over the past decade the intensity of globalisation has increased through, first, technological change, particularly with the internet, and second, increased pressure to accept international norms for the regulation of a wide range of activities, such as the OECD's harmful tax competition initiative and pressures for liberalisation of trade and domestic commercial markets. While recognising that globalisation, widely defined, provides opportunities, it has also accelerated change – causing social insecurity – and bringing with it greater pressures on local culture and traditions.

25.   While the technological changes driving the recent intensification of globalisation has great potential for enhancing economic and social interactions with the rest of the world, the Pacific nations remain hampered by their characteristics of smallness, isolation and vulnerability in taking full advantage of such opportunities. There is, therefore, an increasing risk of marginalisation as the rest of the world changes more rapidly. Reducing the risk of marginalisation requires assistance in:
*   enhancing the availability and quality of education to give individuals the capital required to interact meaningfully with the rest of the world;
*   addressing the so-called "digital divide" (which reflects many other older "divides"), which is particularly intense for the more isolated communities within the Pacific island countries;
*   providing the extra skills and capacities that are required to deal with the shift in regulatory policies from the domestic into the global arena.

26.   It is important also to recognize a great diversity among the Pacific islands in their stages of development. For example, constraints and opportunities facing a remote micro-state such as Kiribati vary significantly from, for example, Papua New Guinea. Thus policy options and approaches will need to be tailored to country circumstances. The characteristics that have important implications for development include:

- *Remoteness and insularit*y: being located far from major markets and comprising widely dispersed multi-island micro-states, resulting in high international and domestic transportation costs.

- *Susceptibility to natural disasters*: being frequently affected by adverse climatic and other natural events which, typically, affect the entire population and economy.

- *Small population size*: many states are limited by small population size as it effects institutional capacity and increases unit costs of services, and also limits the potential for private sector growth and investment.

- *Limited diversification*: a narrow resource base and small domestic markets necessarily results in relatively undiversified production and export activities and also limits capacity in the private sector.

- *Openness*: heavy reliance on external trade and foreign investment to overcome inherent scale and resource limitations leaves states vulnerable to external economic and environmental shocks.

27.   Despite these factors a number of the Pacific island countries have achieved high average per capita incomes relative to other developing countries. However, poverty remains a serious challenge. For those countries for which data are available poverty rates are higher than that which would be expected in countries with the same per capita income. This corresponds with anecdotal evidence that the multi-island nature of some states is associated with an uneven distribution of income, with the bulk of economic activity concentrated in capitals.

Table 1: Human Development and Poverty Indices

Country	Human Development Index [1]	Human Poverty Index [2]
Palau	0.861	10.8
Cook Islands	0.822	6.1
Niue	0.774	4.8
Fiji Islands	0.667	8.5
Nauru	0.663	12.1
Tonga	0.647	5.9
Samoa	0.590	8.6
Tuvalu	0.583	7.3
Federated States of Micronesia	0.569	26.7
Marshall Islands	0.563	19.5
Kiribati	0.515	12.6
Vanuatu	0.425	46.4
Solomon Islands	0.371	49.1
Papua New Guinea	0.314	52.2
AVERAGE	0.597	19.3
(1) Higher values indicate higher levels of human development. (2) Lower values indicate lower human poverty. Source: UNDP, *Pacific Human Development Report*, 1999		

28.   The UNDP *Human Development Report 1999* notes that poverty of opportunity is a more encompassing image of poverty in the Pacific. This is borne out in many ways, such as rapid emigration from some countries, high but disguised unemployment, and a small but emerging subculture of youth crime and despair, including extraordinarily high level of youth suicide in some parts of the region.

29.   Young people are especially at risk of unemployment. In some countries up to seven times as many young people are seeking work each year as there are new jobs available. Women are also disadvantaged in the job market. Although their numbers have grown over the past decade, women workers are at a general disadvantage through their lesser access to vocational and higher formal education and because they are usually lower paid, lower ranked and less often promoted than men.

Pacific Vision for Education

30.   From the previous discussion it can be inferred that the ultimate purpose of development in the region is the successful harmonisation of the old and the new, indigenous and international, the dissolution of the current dissonance between the two and the creation of a seamless blend that is uniquely Pacific. The questions that arise then are: what does education mean within this context and what are its purposes? The answers would assist in identifying the principles underlying a Pacific vision for education.

31.   The six educational goals of the Dakar World Education for All Forum Framework for Action (see paper PIFS(01)FEDA.09) represent principles applicable to development but interpreted through the experience of the last half of the 20th century.

32.   The Dakar Education for All reaffirmed that education is a fundamental human right. It further reaffirmed that achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer, and that basic education needs must be met as a matter of urgency. The Dakar Framework for Action committed Governments, organisations, agencies and groups to the achievement of education for all goals and targets for every citizen and for every society. Key recommendations include:

- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, achieve gender equality and access to basic education for all by 2015.

- Direct urgent attention to the many who have no access to primary education. A significant portion of the adults (especially in Melanesia) are illiterate and the quality learning and the acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies. Youth and adults are denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and to be able to participate fully in economic and nation building in their respective societies.

- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

- Review national financial commitments with the view to step up investment in basic education.

33.   Other relevant decisions in international fora include:

International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (Seoul 1999)

The Seoul International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and the review by the secretariat of the FICs education strategic activities desire the re-focusing of formal and informal as well as non-formal education activities to better support the private sectors' skills requirements and employment opportunities.

Convention on the Right of the Child

All but two Forum Island countries have acceded to this international agreement which recognises that Education is essential for all children in the following:
- Making primary education compulsory and available free to all.
- Promoting the different forms of Secondary and Vocational Education and making higher education accessible to all.

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

All but three FICs have acceded to the ICPD, and have pledged to:
- Achieve universal access to quality education, with particular priority to primary and technical education and job training.
- Combat illiteracy and eliminate gender disparities in access to, retention in and support for education.
- Promote non-formal education for all young people.

Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Half the members of the Forum have acceded and agreed to:
- Ensuring equal access to education
- Eradicating illiteracy among women
- Improving women's access to vocational training
- Allocating sufficient resources to monitor the implementation of educational reforms.

Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (CDSD)

All but four FICs have acceded to CDSD and have declared:
- The right of all children to education
- That education of the child is directed to developing his personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities.

Suva Declaration on Sustainable Human Development in the Pacific

This declaration by the Forum Leaders in 1994 pledged to:
- Review the curricula of training centres and non-formal education programmes to match skills taught (outcomes) with the requirements for employment and livelihood in the traditional subsistence economy.
- Develop non-formal education and work-based programmes in cooperation with the private sector.
- Promote the role of NGOs in providing non-formal skills training as well as community-based education.

34.   A vision of Pacific education encompasses that already defined in conjunction with the world community, but it must of necessity be also a response to a vision of Pacific countries for their people's, which include the maintenance and enhancement of their own distinctive values, and social, political, economic, and cultural heritages; and the development of the capacities that could create balance between these and those promoted and adopted at the international level. It is education not only for the survival of Pacific communities but for their transformation as well to become equal partners with other members of the global community.

SESSION 1 : WHERE TO NOW?

The Status of Pacific Education Today

35.   The role education is expected to play in this process of survival and transformation is enormously challenging. An education system that is based on the new vision for education is expected to address issues of access, equity, quality and life-long learning for all, maintain and enhance the Pacific's unique heritages, and contribute to the realisation of human rights, political stability, economic prosperity, social and cultural cohesiveness.

36.   At the same time it is necessary to address the best ways and means to deliver education, clearly identify its outcomes and how it could adequately measure these, and what resources are necessary to achieve this all this. A brief examination of Pacific education today will serve three purposes: to demonstrate the extent to which the present system is able to serve the new vision of education; to identify any gaps and shortfalls in the system; and to point to possible areas where it could be improved to better meet the needs and expectations of the new vision.

Recent Developments

37.   The last decade has seen changes take place in Pacific education, namely:
  - Pacific governments and donors invested substantially in education in attempts to widen access, reduce inequalities, improve quality and relevancy, and increase the number of better-educated and skilled human resources needed for development;
  - More schools were built and equipped in both rural and urban areas;
  - Some governments invested in early childhood education and those with physical and learning disabilities;
  - Resources were invested in the education and training of teachers and improving their conditions of service;
  - New vocational and technical programmes were established and more support was given to non-formal education programmes in attempts to better meet the needs of adults and life-long education;
  - Revised and new curricula more relevant and appropriate to Pacific contexts and individual needs were developed and taught in schools;
  - More books, equipment, and classroom resources to support the new curriculum changes were put in schools;
  - Improved school and national management systems were put in place;
  - New assessment procedures that reflected the new directions in curriculum development were adopted; and
  - Newly formulated education corporate plans are being implemented.

38.   The results of these investments are encouraging. Data from the Pacific Regional EFA report show that access to education at all levels, but particularly at the primary level, has improved. All except three governments have claimed universal primary education, although it is yet to be free. Participation, retention, completion,

and educational attainment rates for the whole population have improved, as have teachers' academic and professional qualifications and conditions of service.

39.   A wider variety of delivery modes are being used, particularly in non-formal education programmes. Governments have strengthened partnerships with non-government organisations and communities to widen access and improve the delivery of education. Some attempts have also been made to broaden the outcomes of education in some countries by including civics and values education for citizenship in the formal curriculum. More countries are using their own indigenous languages as a medium of instruction in the early years of primary education and beyond.

Challenges

40.   However, disparities in terms of gender, rural-urban areas, funding and resources, performance and outcomes are more difficult to resolve and continue to varying degrees in the region. Such disparities are exacerbated by poverty and other social and cultural variables. The quality of education, in terms of the quality of teachers, curriculum, relevancy, resources, teaching and learning styles, management systems, assessment procedures, and performance and outcomes, continue to be below expectations.

41.   Academic failure in the region is significant as measured by drop-out and repeater figures and in terms of basic literacy and numeracy achievements. Unemployed youth, alienated and disaffected by their formal education, is increasing, in societies where at least 50% of the population are under 21 years of age. The school curricula, despite attempts at redirecting these to vocational needs, remain largely academic and fail to meet needs of Pacific students and their communities and thus the outcomes of schooling do not match the needs of development and the vision of Pacific societies.

42.   Schools and systems continue to be inefficient and ineffective. The achievement of quality education therefore remains a challenge despite its purported importance for the region, the high priority accorded it in development plans and the significant investments by governments, donors and communities.

43.   The provision of basic education is affected by political, economic and social and cultural factors and constraints, all of which need to be understood before any reforms can be effectively implemented.

44.   Political decisions impinge on all the other variables affecting access, equity and quality. They affect the geographical distribution and kinds of institutions provided; allocation of funds to each level and program; the deployment of physical and human resources, such as teachers, their training, conditions of service and remuneration; the kind of curricula taught in schools, their emphases and orientation; the style and culture of management in schools; and even the relationships between educational institutions and their clients, and the level of community participation and input to the education process.

45.   The importance of the political factors in respect to access, equity and quality cannot, therefore, be sufficiently stressed. Without political commitment to universal access to basic education (as stated at the World Education for All Forum in Dakar) and to increasing access and opportunities at the higher levels of education, many of the obstacles that constrain participation, particularly those affecting disadvantaged groups, will not be effectively addressed.

46.   The economic factors centre on the fact that education is a costly enterprise at the individual and the national level. Access and equity in basic education are dependent on the economic capacity of countries. Countries with fragile and vulnerable economies sometimes have to make very difficult choices concerning priorities in basic education. These choices should, however, be made in the light of the rewards that will be returned.

47.   The social and cultural environment influences the value placed on, and the efforts directed toward, achievement by individuals in the education system. The attitudes of the whole society as well as sub-groups and the individuals comprising them need, therefore, to be understood if the issue of equity in educational participation is to be successfully addressed.

48.   Perceptions of the benefits of education by groups and individuals will also be based on the abilities of the institutions themselves to provide meaningful and worthwhile educational services in terms that are considered appropriate and relevant by such groups and individuals. These include, for example:
- the quality of school buildings, teachers and materials;
- curriculum programs;
- management and organisation;
- effective relationships with communities;
- valid and reliable assessment procedures,

Where to Now?

49:    Forum Island Countries are already investing substantially in education and some notable successes have been achieved despite the severe economic constraints they have faced in implementing educational reforms. However, it is clear that the role and outcomes envisaged are not being fully achieved. It is also clear that the availability of resources, both human and material, will continue to be constrained for the foreseeable future. However, even within this limitation some strategies could be developed and implemented which could bring about the desired outcomes for education. In this context there is a requirement to make a concerted effort to:
- broaden educational outcomes to establish policy and planning frameworks which meet national development goals;
- deliver education across basic educational sectors in partnership with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and the private sector (paper PIFS(01)FEDA.15 refers);
- resource quality basic education (paper PIFS(01)FEDA.12 refers).

Broadening the Outcomes of Education

50.   The vision of Pacific nations for the future goes far beyond elementary requirements. So far basic education in the region has remained fixated - though not necessarily with success - on formal primary education and the development of literacy and numeracy skills. If basic education is also about human rights and democracy, good governance and equity*,* the maintenance and enhancement of Pacific heritages, and participating in the global community, then the contents of education, the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values taught and learned as part of basic education must reflect these purposes.

Introducing Concepts of 'Governance' Into Education

51.   Governance has become an increasingly important facet of economic development theory as a consequence of more pure economics oriented development policy having generally failed (except in East and South East Asia) over the past five decades. This failure led to an exploration as to what was missing from the development "paradigm": the answer has turned out to be lack of good governance.

52.   In practical terms this has meant an insecure environment for economic players – whether these be domestic or foreign investors, resource owners or the labour force – to pursue income generating activities. This encompasses fair and equitable access (not partial or favoured) to opportunities to undertake income-generating activities, certainty as to the relevant laws and regulations and the certainty that laws and regulations will be enforced. Without these elements economic players will be reluctant to play a role and income-generating opportunities will thus be limited, and at the extreme, non-existent.

53.   Across the Pacific security interests, and perceptions of security, differ widely, but have been heightened by the crises in Fiji and Solomon Islands in 2000. The main situations that have involved overt conflict in the Pacific in the past twenty years all involve at least four common elements: ethnic differences; land disputes; economic disparities; and a lack of confidence in the government's ability to resolve differences fairly or satisfactorily

54.   Concepts of governance can be delivered through formal basic education through a number of traditional curricula, particularly history and social studies, and can be reinforced in many other ways. The key is ensuring that, first, the curriculum covers the relevant material, second, that teachers are aware of and can teach this material, and third, that the resource materials are available.

55.   In developed countries there has been a significant increase in the emphasis on preparing children to participate fully in their societies. This has given rise to more wide spread "civics" curriculums that cover both citizen rights and responsibilities. These are an important element in not only delivering knowledge on governance but also introducing the concept of "good governance".

56.   To achieve stability and cohesiveness in societies, the preconditions for economic prosperity, all individuals must become fully participatory members of their societies. It makes sense, therefore, for the education system to make sure that such

elements are competently learnt by all individuals and it is only from this base of security that individuals acquire the confidence to add on other skills, values, and knowledge which they need to become members of the larger society and the international community.

57.   Much of the work on basic education for good governance is undertaken outside of the formal frameworks of school systems in FICs. There is a distinct separation of that which is considered core school curricular and extra-curricular activities and while principles of governance are duly acknowledged as essential to building civic pride and good citizenship, the focus in delivery, skills development and value orientations are given minimal time slots in the school week. Given that indigenous education prepares people for community participation, community values and spirituality, the partnerships between the formal and non formal providers of basic education should be strengthened to better integrate the good governance component in current programs.

National and Regional development goals

58.   There is need for each country, in line with national development goals and commitments, to clearly identify desired basic educational outcomes and the learning needs of individuals and groups in that society. Although such an exercise is important for all countries, it is particularly important in multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual societies where some consensus will have to be achieved as to the common core elements of education that all individuals must learn and the additional aspects specific to each group.

59.   The relationship between education and developmental goals and the larger vision of society is complex. While planning processes in the region have improved considerably in the last decade, there is still an urgent need to improve educational planning and to give due recognition to the complexity of the educational process and the range of educational providers which need to participate in it. National planning for universal and equitable basic educational participation must take due cognizance of the cultural, social, political and economic contexts of each nation, the interdependence of these and the inter-relationships of the various levels of educational provisions and institutions.

60.   In order to develop sound policy and planning frameworks it is essential to improve data and information collection and retrieval systems to provide accurate, timely, and relevant data on which informed policy decisions can be made. Improvements in the capacity of national systems to develop coherent national educational plans is a further priority, and will require high level training of key personnel and strengthening of the human and material resources of planning units, for example, make use of new information technology.

Conclusions

61.   The papers for this session highlight that while basic education has been a priority, this has not been turned fully into effective action in the region. While some countries have made progress, and the severity of problems with basic education varies significantly between countries, it appears that significant gains could be made

through Forum members sharing their experiences - both successes and failures - in this area. In addition the possibility of sharing resources - particularly for inputs into basic education system - across the region might be explored. To give focus to such efforts and to strategies that Ministers might agree (see paragraph 50) on during the course of the meeting, Ministers may wish to consider adopting an overall set of goals for basic education for the region.

62.	Basic education has, by its nature, very broad and strong impacts on the potential for private sector development and for the success of students pursuing higher education. It is, however, also a very intensive user of manpower (for teachers) and financial resources. The goals set for basic education and the strategies to be followed therefore need to be well integrated with national planning policies and planning frameworks, as discussed in paragraphs 58 to 60 above. Ministers may wish to consider a resolution to this effect (see recommendations below).

63.	The papers for this session have also highlighted some of the weaknesses in education systems at present, though recognising that these vary in intensity from country to country. Some such weaknesses involve directly the range of outputs from the education system, including gender equality and governance, which were the specific focus of papers PIFS(01) FEDA.10 and FEDA.16. The recommendation from these papers are reproduced below for the consider of Ministers.

64.	Other weaknesses are related to the resourcing of education. For example, alienation of students can be related directly to the number and quality of teachers and to the relevance of the curriculum. Such resourcing issues are dealt with in the following section.

SESSION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision and Goals

Ministers may wish to consider adopting a set of goals for basic education for the Forum region.

Integration with National Planning

It was agreed that there is an urgent need for each country, in line with national development goals and commitments, to improve basic educational planning, through clearly identifying desired basic educational outcomes and the learning needs of individuals and groups in that society.

To this end it was further agreed that:
- national planning for universal and equitable educational participation must take into account:
  - the cultural, social, political and economic contexts of education;
  - the inter-relationships of the various levels of educational provisions and institutions.
- in order to develop sound policy and planning frameworks it is essential to improve:
  - data and information collection and retrieval systems to provide accurate, timely, and relevant data on for informed policy decisions;
  - the capacity of national systems to develop coherent national educational plans through high level training of key personnel and strengthening of the human and material resources of planning units.

Education for Good Governance
(PIFS(01)FEDA.10)

10.1   The lack of information on which to build good curricula and resource materials has been noted and suggests:
- That agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO and USP be encouraged to set up web pages containing basic source material on education for governance.
- That the Forum Secretariat or the USP establish a collection of printed source material on educating for good governance.
- That a training component on case writing be integrated into CSO capacity building programs so as to encourage the documentation of field experiences and practices relating to education for good governance.
- That a directory of expertise on basic education for good governance be compiled for purposes of strengthening networks and collaboration.

10.2   Education for governance needs widespread support to be effective and for the formal sector requires explicit government recognition. In this respect it is suggested that education for governance be incorporated into national educational development plans as a key policy for HRD and that the component activities be catered for and supported in the national education budget.

10.3   National efforts in education for governance be extended to the wider community, through non formal education, and to assist in this:

- That a first phase of advocacy and awareness programs be undertaken with key stakeholders in education to build partnerships, networking and linkages aimed at promoting basic education for good governance.
- That formal and non formal providers of basic education be represented on national curriculum advisory bodies to provide advice on social science and the means for incorporating a governance focus in the content and delivery processes.

Social And Economic Benefits Of Ensuring Gender Equality In Education (PIFS(01)FEDA.16)

16.1   Recognising and building on existing initiatives, and in fulfilment of existing commitments to the Pacific Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Education for All and the World Social Summit, encourage their governments to undertake the following actions in support of the above Principle Statements:

- At the national level undertake gender analysis of education access and quality and use findings to support education policy revision and to ensure allocation of resources in support of gender equal education;
- Collaborate with Ministers for Finance and Economics to support gender analysis of budget processes in order to highlight ways in which government budgets can more effectively support sustainable and equitable education and HRD;
- Encourage teacher training institutions to utilise existing regional and national services that are providing gender awareness training and data collection training;
- Direct vocational and technical training institutions to provide data on enrolment and completion rates for men and women to government on an annual basis and encourage them to develop institutional gender policies in line with existing constitutional mandates and government commitments to gender equality.
- Review rules and regulations about treatment of students who become pregnant while in school and those with children to ensure they are not discriminated against under existing law.

16.2   Direct the Forum Secretariat to undertake, in the next calendar year, the following actions identified in support of the above Principle Statement promoting gender equitable education policies:

- Work with other regional and international agencies to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators and data categories to monitor gender equality in education.
- Devise strategies to include these indicators and categories in existing and new program activities such as household surveys and censuses across the region

SESSION 2: DELIVERY AND RESOURCING OF BASIC EDUCATION

Delivery of Basic Education

65.   The provision of education to deliver development and education outcomes has implications for the whole process of education, and requires policy, planning, and resources to address:
- Skills required by teachers;
- Curriculum;
- Teaching methods and learning styles;
- School management and culture;
- Delivery mechanisms;
- Assessment procedures;
- Participation of all stakeholders in the planning and delivery of education.

Teachers

66.   Ideal teachers are competent and confident in the content and methodology of their subject, are positive in their attitudes towards themselves, their students, their profession and community, and can communicate with students effectively in the language of instruction. This ideal - which requires a high standard of appropriate training - is based on the belief that teachers are the most important factor in the provision of quality and meaningful education.

67.   It does not matter how brilliantly conceived a program is, or how well supported with excellent resources, it will all go to naught if the teachers do not believe in it, understand its rationale, content and methodology, or possess the capability, imagination and the confidence to implement it. Much of the inequalities experienced in the provision of education and in the outcome of the process is caused by differences in teacher quality.

68.   Critical indicators of the quality of education include the number of trained teachers in a system; the level and quality of initial training of teachers in the field; the capacity of the teacher training institutions for providing sound teacher education programmes; the nature and extent of in-service training being provided for serving teachers, and the overall environment in schools (as shown by the availability of teaching and learning resources and conditions of classrooms and related physical facilities).

Curriculum

69.   Quality curricula in any context does not merely mean materials which are professionally developed containing high level content. It means that the materials are meaningful and worthwhile to the teachers and students of a particular context; that they relate to their experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes and knowledge; that they will assist the child to interact more meaningfully with his environment and will provide him with the means to manipulate and control it.

70.   The curricula must also cater for the different needs of students. Beyond this it must also impart the values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and skills which are

essential to accommodate mainstream development and national participation. The growth of knowledge and information is so fast in the world of today that quality curricula must also develop the tools that can develop flexibility, additive education and life-long learning.

71.   Another element to consider is that from the review of existing educational services, one of the issues that emerged is the scant attention paid to Pacific heritages from the medium of instruction, to core values, knowledge, and belief systems. From an educationalists point of view, it is sound pedagogy to begin the learning process from the familiar to the unfamiliar. In this way, if learning is based on what the children bring to the learning process, the outcome and quality of learning will obviously be enhanced.

72.   Thus formal education system largely ignores the strengths and advantages of the prior learning and knowledge, values and attitudes brought by the children to formal education. To make the best use of these advantages would require a reorientation of the training of teachers, the curriculum, teaching and learning methodologies, assessment procedures, what counts as knowledge and education and, therefore, what counts as outcomes and how these could be measured to ensure that the Pacific heritages are appropriately embedded in the process.

Language Medium

73.   One of the major constraints to effective and successful learning is the language of instruction. The question that should be asked is to what extent do current practices and policies regarding language discriminate unfairly between pupils from different backgrounds in schools, bias admission to higher levels of education and affect the performance of students in education. Again evidence from the literature suggests that the language of instruction of schools does discriminate between pupils of different backgrounds, bias admission to higher levels of education and affect the performance of students.

74.   Education in the mother tongue or the language of the home, provides individuals with a sense of who they are and where they come from; pride in themselves and their society; a strong sense of identity, of belonging and acceptance and stability. It gives them self-worth and begins the process of self-sufficiency and independence. But it also provides a sound basis for the acquisition of a second language which is needed in multilingual and bilingual societies of the Pacific and for the accommodation of generic and mainstream values.

Management

75.   A caring organisation and effective and efficient management system in this context means clear positive goals that are the consequence of continual dialogue among the participants and stakeholders in the process. These comprise the school, the community, the parents and the learners.

76.   Such a management system, within schools and in the larger system, is more likely to effectively address the issues impacting on access, equity and quality

education, and would encompass a caring, people-oriented administration whose actions, plans and directions are based on priority considerations of:

- the needs of children in the classrooms;
- open communication networks that take advantage of the strengths of individuals in the organisation;
- an efficient support service that responds imaginatively, flexibly, sensitively and promptly to identified needs and challenges.

Assessment Tools

77.   The type of assessment and evaluation tools and the indicators that are used within institutions and in national education systems to measure educational outcomes significantly influence not only the attainment and success of individuals and social groups and therefore, equity of outcome, but the allocation of rewards outside of the school system. Educational measurement tools are themselves socially and culturally based, and can be used as political tools to the advantage of some socio-cultural groups and to the detriment of others.

Financing Education

78.   The key issue in improving the quality of basic education is financing. Reference paper PIFS(01)FEDA.11 is the start of some work on this subject (funded by the ADB) but is still work in progress. This paper notes that governments have come under increasing community pressure to allocate greater levels and proportions of total public resources to improving the overall quality of basic education, and to bridge the yawning gaps between rural and urban education resources and outcomes.

79.   Based on preliminary case study evidence from Fiji, this paper argues that with communities having to take on the bulk of the financial responsibility for preschools, this significantly disadvantages children from poorer families, who fail to attend pre-school. Evidence is also presented to show that while "preschoolers" do subsequently perform better academically, relative to those who did not did not attend pre-school (as would be expected), the differences are far more significant for children from poorer families, than for children from average or affluent families.

80.   However, the study points out that the current patterns of enrolments and unit costs in pre-schools (in comparison to primary enrolments and unit costs) imply that were Government to take full financial responsibility and especially for staffing (as they currently have in primary schools) this would have a major impact on the Education budget.

81.   Finally the data analysed indicates an urgent need for strong empirical research, in a joint exercise between education experts and economists, to identify the factors that are leading to good academic outcomes, and to reallocate financial resources to boost the efficiency and productivity of these factors throughout the education system.

Developing Partnerships

82.   Resourcing education in the Pacific will continue to be a major challenge. Full utilisation, therefore, of every available means of delivery such as the technical and scientific developments in information and communication technology to cater for the diverse needs of individuals and groups within the larger society is necessary.

83.   It should also be recognised that although Governments may continue as the major funder of basic education to protect access and equity, government funding alone will be insufficient to provide basic education for all. However, the choice is not between free and private education, but between education financed via a government monopoly and education financed by government in partnership with communities, parents, Civil Society Organisations and the private sector.

84.   Greater participation by non-government members in this partnership can increase the level of resources available, and increase the relevance and effectiveness of the learning process. Non-formal and traditional forms of education must be developed to accommodate the demands for broader outcomes of education and meet the need for universal and equitable access to quality education. Their capacity to contribute to the development of skills for life and income generation could be enhanced (Paper PIFS(01)FEDA.15 refers).

85.   If due consideration is given to children's experiences, knowledge and language in the formal primary school system, as the foundation for all further learning, it will encourage teachers to cultivate a more participatory atmosphere in the classroom. With the greater involvement of non-formal teaching methods, education will become a community concern.

86.   The need for an increase in the contribution and participation by parents and CSOs, including the business community, in technical and vocational training will not only improve access, equity and quality but can create flexibility and increased responsiveness of educational providers to meet educational and training demands.

87.   Pacific countries require technical and vocational education (TVET) systems that are responsive to, and share, the demands of their people and society. A survey was carried out over 2000/2001 of Pacific Island country needs, priorities, capabilities and resources regarding technical and vocational education (see paper PIFS(01)FEDA.13). The highest priority emerging from this survey is a clear need for assistance to strengthen delivery of skills development programmes and all countries noted the need to establish more TVET programmes at secondary or tertiary levels.

88.   The report notes that there is a great need for consolidation, improvement and upgrading of existing training programmes in terms of standards, delivery, staff, equipment and materials to promote efficiency, effectiveness, comparability and credibility. The demands for diversity and quality of training and skills, both from learners and stakeholders, mean that new programmes will have to be developed and introduced into the current technical and vocational education programmes.

89.   Recognising the valuable contribution of CSOs, particularly the churches and private sector and community make to basic education, FIC Governments need to

develop enabling conditions for these organisations and stakeholders to actively participate in the policy, planning, delivery and resourcing of basic education.

Conclusions

90.   The issues raised in this session are aimed at addressing identified weaknesses in education systems, including those raised in the previous session. These can be summarised as:

- alienation and poor performance of students, the result of:
  - the quality and number (relative to student numbers) of teachers;
  - the relevance and lack of Pacific foundation of the curriculum;
  - poor or unresponsive departmental and school managements;

- poor resourcing of basic education, which could be overcome through:
  - re-prioritise education and national government spending;
  - improving the effectiveness of education spending (as noted in the analysis of outcomes and financing), and
  - developing partnerships with CSOs, NGOs and the private sector;

91.   Ministers may wish to consider these elements when considering the recommendations arising from the papers presented in this session. These recommendations are set out below. Ministers may wish to also consider requesting that the work started on an outcomes approach to analysing the financing of basic education (PIFS(01)FEDA.11) be completed.

92.   Ministers may be aware that presently country and regional programmes are being developed for Economic Development Funding (EDF) under the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. At the regional level such programming was considered by a meeting, in April 2001 in Suva, of the National Authorising Officers of the Pacific ACP, who agreed that the focal sectors to be pursued under the 9th EDF Regional Programme be Regional Economic Integration and Human Resource Development.

93.   In a follow-up to this meeting the Forum Secretariat is developing specific programmes to address these focal sectors. In doing so it has identified the overall aim of an HRD strategy as being to improve the region's living standards and international competitiveness by providing opportunities for people to become more skilful, motivated and able to respond flexibly to new challenges and opportunities. It suggests that in particular the HRD strategy might well concentrate on:
- The standardisation and adoption of a regional curriculum for primary and secondary education at the national level in order to facilitate regional tertiary level modalities.
- The establishment of a regional teachers training institute.
- The strengthening of distance education through new technologies
- Training directed at the needs of the economic sectors and industries
- Capacity building of regional Non-State Actors focussing on basic education and training.

94.   Ministers may wish to consider and comment on these suggestions.

SESSION 2: RECOMMENDATIONS
<u>**Note**</u> the Report Of The Technical/Vocational Taskforce on Education And Training in the Pacific Region (PIFS(01)FEDA.13)

**Improving Quality in Basic Education
(PIFS(01)FEDA.12)**

12.1   Early Childhood Education

That while continuing with collaborative efforts with NGOs, church and community organisations in providing ECE to pre-school age children, governments should address resource requirements for ECE teacher training and assess how ECE teachers can obtain the same status and conditions of employment as for their primary counterparts.

12.2   Pre-Service Teacher Education

That upgrading of pre-service training programmes, staffing and resources at the training institutions that is either in process or is being anticipated in most training institutions, be fully addressed as a matter of priority.

That induction for beginning teachers is formalised involving teacher training institutions, CDUs, field staff and schools.

That small island states that do not have their own training institutions consider establishing teachers' centres to be used for complementary training of local trainees who are undertaking USP extension courses in Education as a route to a teacher qualification. A substantive position of a co-ordinator of the teachers' centre be established and filled by a qualified teacher educator who would also supervise school-based training of trainees.

12.3   In-Service Teacher Education

That existing data bases be further utilised to generate teacher supply projections where necessary and plans be implemented to train all untrained teachers as soon as practicable.

That upgrading programmes be considered for serving teachers who are found to be partially trained as assessed against the level of pre-service training currently being offered in most FIC primary training institutions.

That intensive in-service courses targeting specific needs of teachers such as proficiency in English and skills in multi-class teaching be mounted in countries where teachers need such courses.

12.4   Classroom Teaching

In accordance with the local data base on the conditions that exist in schools in terms of the quality of classrooms and physical facilities, attention be paid to upgrading those classrooms which are currently impoverished and provide a sub-standard educational environment for teaching and learning.

12.5   Community Support

That the current initiatives in promoting the active involvement of the school community in the affairs of the school be strengthened in order to enhance the quality of facilities and teaching-learning resources.

12.6   Towards Enhancing Professionalism in Teaching

That enhancing professionalism in teaching, whereby the profession is guided by the ethos, standards and ethics of the profession itself, be promoted as a long-term goal for enhancing teachers' capacity for managing changes and their identity as teachers.

Non Formal Education: Meeting Basic Education Challenges In The Pacific (PIFS(01)FEDA.14)

Recognising that non-formal education (NFE) is an important strategy for development, Governments address immediate NFE needs, including budgetary needs, by undertaking the following actions:

- provide effective communications linkages between NFE, micro-enterprise and micro-financing initiatives.
- establish a focal point (within the appropriate Ministry or department within a ministry) which has close partnerships with NFE providers.
- provide an enabling environment by actively co-ordinating NFE initiatives.
- develop clear and robust national policy on NFE.
- support training at national and regional levels for NFE key personnel.
- ensure effective evaluation and monitoring of NFE programmes.

Civil Society as Basic Education Provider (PIFS(01)FEDA.15)

In recognition of the partnership with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the private sector already in place in all Forum Island Countries in the provision and delivery of basic education, and to enhance the achievement of National, Regional and International commitments, direct the Forum Secretariat in association with other regional organisations and UN agencies to document, and quantify the contribution of Civil Society in the provision and delivery of basic education with the view to developing model enabling government/CSO partnership policies.

Financing of Basic Education

Completion of work analysing the financing of education relative to outcomes would be an important contribution to improved policy formulation in the education sector. The Forum Secretariat could be asked to work with the Asian Development Bank to ensure the work begun is completed and the case studies extended to take in to account other typical cases in the region.

SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM VISION STATEMENT

The Leaders who have participated in the Twenty Sixth meeting of the South Pacific Forum, the paramount regional inter-governmental organisation in the South Pacific, have a vision for enhancing regional cooperation for the next twenty five years in which:-

Forum members cooperate on the basis of equality, friendship and mutual respect - with due regard for what each can afford - in efforts to maintain security, improve living standards and ensure sustainable development throughout the region;

Opportunities for cooperation with other governments, non-government organisations and international organisations, including other bodies in the Asia-Pacific, are actively pursued and developed;

Resources, including fisheries, forestry, minerals, water and land, are developed with proper regard for conservation, the legacy of past generations and the future;

Unity in securing shared interests contributes to the national, regional and global good;

Material progress is matched by improvement in the quality of people's lives, including human development, equality between women and men, and protection of children.

Vulnerability to the effects of natural disasters, environmental damage and other threats will be overcome;

Indigenous and other values, traditions and customs of the region are respected and promoted through cultural, sporting and other exchanges;

Self-determination will be exercised in the remaining dependant territories, and unwelcome activities by external powers, including nuclear testing, will cease;

International economic cooperation through trade, investment and other exchanges, strengthens subsistence and commercial agriculture, industrial development and competition, leading to growth - with equity, broadly-based participation and capacity-building for self-reliance;

Openness, accountability and other principles of good government are embodied in the practices, policies and plans of regional institutions; and

National, sub-regional and regional efforts to achieve the Forum's vision receive the support they require from the Forum Secretariat and other regional organisations.

Issued at Madang, Papua New Guinea. 14th September 1995

Objective/Level/ Code	Level of Intervention	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Major Assumptions
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME STRATEGIES **2 Education and Training**				
OBJECTIVE	To enhance the productive capabilities of the people of the Pacific Islands in an efficient and cost-effective manner, thereby enabling their full participation in the economy and enjoyment of the benefits of social and economic development through an improved quality of life			Regional initiatives are consistent with National priorities
OUTPUTS/RESULTS				
2.1 Improved Supply, Quality and Relevance of Education System Graduates	- Improved quality of core primary and secondary education curricula; - Increased relevance of education and - Improved training in technical sciences, private sector-related employment, management and entrepreneurship, - Strengthened quality of teachers, curriculum staff and training personnel; - Improved standards and certification of education and skills training	- Improved performance of school graduates - Less dependence on foreign personnel for professional and skilled functions - Improved attractiveness to foreign investors and competitive position of countries - Reduced unemployment rates	Surveys of national and regional education performance Surveys and data on employment, investment flows and new business ventures	Effective cooperation/collaboration amongst PIC government agencies, NGOs and communities as well as between CROP agencies with shared responsibilities (USP, SPC, FORSEC, SPREP, SOPAC, SPTO)
2.2 Improved Life skills of Education System Graduates	- Improved policies and plans for vocational and skills training, focused on non-formal and subsistence sector; - Targeted interventions to promote capacities of disadvantaged groups (women and youth) for employment and other productive and income-earning activity	- National and regional policies and programmes on vocational and skills training for rural and urban disadvantaged groups - Increased participation in productive activity of women and youth from urban and rural sectors	Surveys of economic activity and private sector employment	Effective cooperation/collaboration amongst PIC government agencies, NGOs and communities as well as between CROP agencies with shared responsibilities (USP, SPC, FORSEC, SPREP, SOPAC, SPTO)
2.3 Improved Access to Education and Training	- Strengthened transport, communications and information infrastructure, and supporting services through distance and part-time learning - Improved private sector and NGO participation in education and training delivery	- Improved student enrolments through full time, part-time and distance learning programmes - Increased private sector and NGO educational and training institutions and programmes	Statistics of student enrolments and performance	Effective cooperation/collaboration amongst PIC government agencies, NGOs and communities as well as between CROP agencies with shared responsibilities (USP, SPC, FORSEC, SPREP, SOPAC, SPTO)