

Check against delivery



**ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review Regional Preparatory
Meeting for Africa**

***The Right to Education for All in Africa:
Reinforcing Quality and Equity***

**Session on
Education and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: Progress,
Challenges and the Path to Equity**

by

*Kishore Singh,
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Hon ble Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to start by thanking the Vice PresTET19(y)10()-159(thanking)10()-159(the)§dent59(thanof

As you will see, in my opinion a stronger emphasis on the relationship between both the MDGs and EFA goals and human rights can greatly contribute to accelerate progress and ensure it is more sustainable. In particular, the human rights approach is central to the theme we are addressing here. In this, we must fully recognize the paramount importance of the right to education, both as a right in itself and as a means for the enjoyment of other rights.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

actors. Human rights treaty bodies, for example, repeatedly recommend States to make the right to free primary education an enforceable right in national Constitution and law. Legal instruments are in fact essential to guarantee that everyone enjoys an equal protection of his or her right to education.

But building national accountability fabric goes beyond establishing adequate legal and regulatory frameworks; it includes ensuring universal access to justice and remedies. It also includes respecting the work of free and independent civil society organizations and supporting the establishment of national human rights institutions that can permanently monitor the work of the State. These mechanisms, for example, can greatly contribute to ensure resources dedicated to education are well spent and ensure that violations to the right to education do not remain unaddressed.

As rising inequalities emerge as a central concern even within countries that experienced economic development and achieved a good expansion of access to schools at primary levels – questions must be raised on the effectiveness of the existing strategies to implement both the MDGs and the EFA.

Failure to fully integrate the human rights principles of non-discrimination and inequality in education laws and policies can affect the effectiveness of all sorts of initiatives. For example,

structural discrimination against groups such as women, minorities, persons with disabilities or migrants, for example.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Equality of opportunity in education is as a central concern not only for human rights discussions, but for the effective implementation of important commitments such as the MDGs and EFA. In my first report to the Human Rights Council I just tried to develop in more detail how legal and policy instruments, framed by international human rights standards, can better address inequalities in education.

Perhaps one of the key conclusions regarding the contribution of a human rights approach to MDG and EFA processes is that human rights mechanisms do not prescribe specific solutions for all these great challenges faced in Africa and elsewhere regarding these goals, but they certainly give the essential tools to timely identify the most important challenges faced and address them in a comprehensive manner keeping always the focus on the most vulnerable.

Once again thank you for the opportunity. I look forward to the discussions and intend to remain engaged in this dialogue we are having today and during the coming ECOSOC meeting.

Thank you.