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*Knowledge and skills for development:
The role of secondary education
and training in the Middle East
and North Africa*

A Policy Makers' Conference

*Jointly organised by the
World Bank and the
European Training Foundation*

Turin 7-10 May 2000

*Sponsorship provided by the
Italian Ministry of Education*



CONFERENCE SUMMARY



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Foreword

In recent years, the role of secondary education and training systems has changed drastically throughout the world. No longer considered merely a component of the overall education system, secondary education and training have become an indispensable tool for improving socio-economic conditions and achieving labour market balance, especially in countries where such advancements depend in large measure on the development of human resources. These include the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, most of which now recognise the importance of such systems and are looking to public authorities to create the necessary conditions to foster their new role. In addition, secondary education and training are today viewed as complementary forces imparting knowledge and skills to the labour force, whose challenges therefore need to be tackled with a integrated rather than a fragmented approach.

These new challenges were the subject of a conference titled *Knowledge and Skills for Development: The Role of Secondary Education and Training in the Middle East and North Africa* held in Turin, Italy, from May 7 to 10, 2000, under the auspices of the World Bank and the European Training Foundation, an agency of the European Union based in Turin. The Foundation's mission is to support vocational education and training reform in a number of countries in economic transition. The conference was attended by ministers of education and labour and by senior officials from sixteen countries of the region: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, the Republic of Djibouti, the Republic of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. Participants also included representatives of six EU countries, along with some members of the European Commission and international organisations such as the ILO, CEDEFOP, OECD, and UNESCO. Experts from the World Bank, European Training Foundation, international organisations, EU member states, Hungary, Canada, and the Med-MENA region led the discussions in plenary sessions and in working groups.

The conference received generous financial support from the World Bank, the European Training Foundation, the government of Japan, and Italian authorities at the national, regional, and local level, most notably Italy's Ministry of Education, the Comune and the Provincia di Torino, and the Regione Piemonte. The Italian Ministry of Education also provided funds for the publication of this report.

The primary purpose of the report is to summarise the discussions in Turin. It is also hoped that the discussions will encourage countries of the region to continue their dialogue on the importance of secondary education and training systems. The conference can therefore be considered the first step of a long-term process dedicated to cooperation in the pursuit of the objectives identified in Turin. The full texts presented by speakers at the conference can be downloaded from the following web sites:

- www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/medamenaconference
- www.worldbank.org/wbi OR www.worldbank.org/education/secondary

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Executive summary

In many countries in the Middle East and North Africa secondary education and training are unable to fulfil the training needs of the population. In the near future, the speed of globalisation and technological change will further increase the need for a profound change in secondary education and training, as youth will need to prepare for a future in which change will be a central element. The consequence for education will be a shift from a *learning to do* paradigm to one of *learning to learn*.

Education and training need to balance the needs of a country's population and those of its labour market. Reliable mechanisms to gather relevant data on such needs are absent in most countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, and they need to be put in place.

Quality assessment, based on clearly defined targets, should be a means of lifting up the education system as a whole and not a means to promote the demise of individual schools performing below set standards.

If the relevance of secondary education is to be ensured, all stakeholders in training need to be involved in the definition, evaluation and updating of training standards. Whatever system is adopted for defining, updating and implementing training standards and certifications, it needs to be transparent because it needs to be used by different stakeholders with different backgrounds.

In curricula, more emphasis needs to be placed on developing the capacity to acquire new skills later in life. Coordination between the initial and continuing education sectors and in-service training is imperative.

As changes to the nature of vocational curricula are likely to bring it closer to general secondary education, improved horizontal connections and generally increased cooperation between these two sectors are needed.

The role of national authorities in education should be one of strategic management and supervision of the system as a whole. This includes facilitating and encouraging dialogue among all key stakeholders.

Streaming is a contentious issue. Its relevance to secondary education depends greatly on educational levels attained. In countries where the average number of years of compulsory schooling is low, early streaming may be a more valid option than in countries where education is compulsory until the age of 16.

Most countries in the Middle East and North Africa use governmental auditing systems to monitor educational expenditure by individual institutions. Returns to investments in secondary education are a widely debated topic, yet mechanisms for monitoring performance are virtually non-existent.

Financing mechanisms based on quantitative calculation parameters can be effectively supplemented by incentives based on qualitative ones, such as performance indicators, but such incentives can only be successful in an environment in which there is transparency in both financial accounting and performance, at the school and system levels. In addition, incentives and their application to the individual education and training institutions presuppose a higher degree of autonomy than most schools in the region currently have.

By streamlining education and training management and policy development among different authorities, much waste of human, material and financial resources can be avoided.

The organisation of stakeholders, e.g. through tri-partite consultation mechanisms, will be a persistent feature of the educational debate in the Middle East and North Africa. The dominance of small and medium enterprises (SME) and the importance of the informal sector mean that there is little history of industrial organisation and that, even today, some stakeholders may be extremely difficult to organise or represent.

Teachers and trainers need continued training to be able to successfully assume their new roles – as facilitators rather than as instructors – and the profession needs to be made more appealing. One way to address both issues is by encouraging closer collaboration between industry and education, with teachers and enterprises ‘exchanging services’.

Good practices in secondary education reform are available in a number of countries in the region. Increased intra-regional collaboration is, therefore, highly recommended.

I. Background

Education in the 21st century

1. Dramatic changes undergone by societies, at all levels - global, regional and local - are shaking the traditional foundations of education and training policies. The growing importance of information and communication technology (ICT) and the globalisation of trade and industry are increasingly invalidating conventional employment patterns and expanding the range of competencies deemed 'basic' by employers and civil society.
2. This has two major consequences:
 - A job is becoming less of a choice for life; in fact the public perception of a 'job' is moving away from the (more permanent) notion of 'profession' towards a (more temporary) one of 'occupation'. As a result prospective employees are increasingly expected to have received an initial education and training sufficiently comprehensive to facilitate the regular updating of their professional skills.
 - The broadening of expected basic competencies in turn means that acquiring them necessitates more than primary education. This is particularly true for countries in economic transition, where secondary education and training play a crucial role in equipping citizens with sufficiently broad basic competencies.
3. In recent years, most countries, regardless of their stage of economic development, focused on continued training, adult education and life-long learning. However, the perception has grown that continued training is not simply a matter of exposing the labour force to new ideas and technologies. The *trainability* of individuals is an important condition for successful retraining, and this is determined by general competencies acquired early in life. Training for these competencies is now widely acknowledged to be among the core requirements of formal education. The *World Declaration on Education for All*, drafted in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, illustrates this international consensus. It recognises basic learning needs to include 'knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning'.¹
4. Globalisation is having an impact in every 'corner' of the globe. Indications are that tomorrow's world will be more mobile and interconnected than can be grasped today. Skills and behaviours acquired during secondary education and training will be increasingly critical to the ability to cope with the effects of globalisation.

1 The *World Declaration on Education for All* was agreed upon together with a *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* by representatives of 155 governments assembled at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March, 1990. The documents can be found at: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/JOMTIE_E.PDF. Information on the 2000 World Education Forum held in Dakar can be found on <http://www2.unesco.org/wef/en-conf/index.shtml>

5. International economic developments are therefore not the only factor calling for a re-assessment of the role of secondary education. Globalisation in all its aspects requires preparing young citizens for tomorrow's world. This means preparing them for constant change, helping them to help themselves, with a greater emphasis on process than outcome. Quoting the Delors Commission, reporting to UNESCO in 1996, education in the 21st century should involve not only *learning to do*, but also *learning to know* (particularly in the sense of *learning to learn*), *learning to be* and *learning to live together*.²

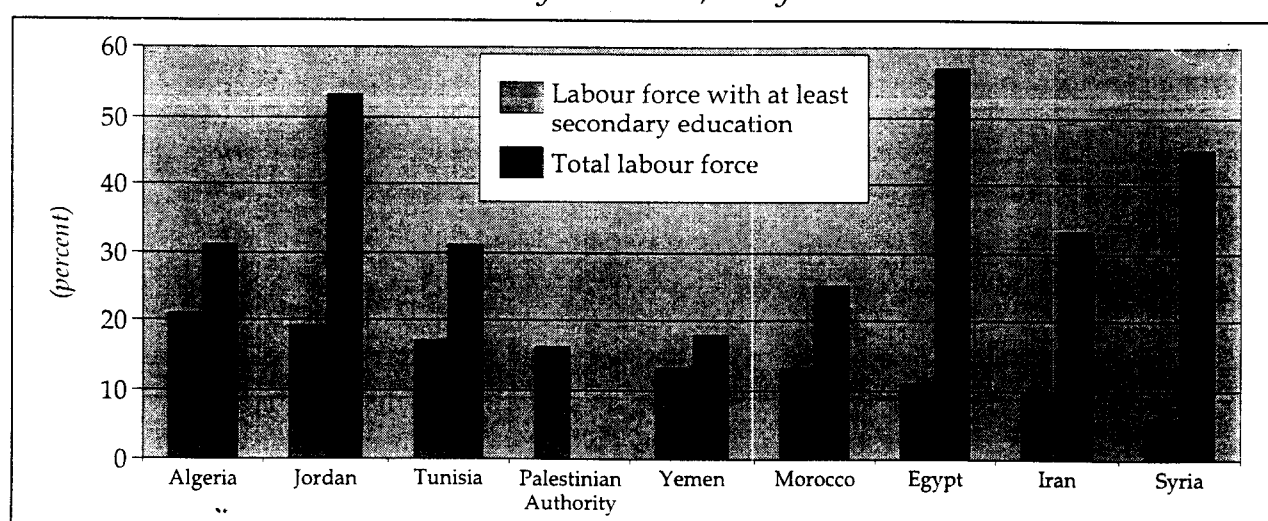
The Middle East and North Africa

6. Globalisation, with its increased international co-operation and competition, will have a serious impact on the hitherto relatively protected economies and labour markets of the Middle East and North Africa, and will shake their traditional practices. Increased integration in the world economy will open opportunities, but exposure to international competition will also force local industries to revise their strategies and labour requirements.

7. Aware of these developments, a number of Middle East and North Africa governments are presently reviewing the role of secondary education, with a view towards helping their citizens cope with an environment – personal and professional – which is changing at a faster pace than ever before. Others are ready to commence similar reforms.

8. They are in a unique position to do so. With some 40% of the total population of the region under age 15 in 1996³, for the vast majority of whom secondary education and training is the final stage of the formal education process, the potential impact of reforms in this field is very large, even in the short to medium term. However, besides a well-timed opportunity, there is also a pressing need for review. The absence of significant economic growth and the high levels of youth and graduate unemployment experienced by most countries in the region oblige their governments to critically review their economic strategies.

Figure 1: Unemployment rates: Total and among workers with at least secondary education, early 1990's



Source: World Bank, 1995

2 *Learning, the Treasure Within*, Delors et al, UNESCO 1996. A summary of the recommendations in PDF format can be found at: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/15_62.pdf

3 Source: *Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Strategy Towards Learning for Development*. World Bank, 1999.

9. Assessing the relevance of formal education and training systems ought to be an integrated part of such an exercise. A comprehensive review, looking in particular at the pivotal role secondary education and training play in the overall education process, is urgently needed.

The Turin Conference

10. Accounting for 55% of all official international development assistance, the European Union and its Member States have in the recent past intensified their support to social and economic development in the regions immediately bordering the Union. The MEDA Programme is the Commission's main instrument for providing such support to the regions of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). As human resources development is seen as a key contributing factor to economic prosperity, the development of civil society and peace and stability, the EU is committed to strengthening education and training in the region.

11. During the past decade a number of published World Bank policy papers on primary education, vocational/technical education and training, and higher education have contributed significantly to knowledge and dialogue on education reform world-wide. A similar consolidation of World Bank knowledge on education and training at the secondary level, however, has not been completed. Countries in the MENA region, with their often robust rivalry between the general education and training sub-sectors, presented a good a regional framework to begin this process of consolidation.

12. Countries in the Middle East and North Africa have distinct historical and cultural backgrounds, and they realise that they will benefit from international co-operation in their reform efforts, whether between neighbouring states or among larger, and geographically more remote groups of countries.

13. In order to "jump-start" this co-operation, a regional ministerial conference on secondary education and training was held in Turin, Italy, May 7-10, 2000. The Conference (*Knowledge and Skills for Development: the Role of Secondary Education and Training in the Middle East and North Africa*) was organised in partnership between the World Bank and the European Training Foundation, a specialised agency of the European Union.

14. Participants represented fifteen Med-MENA countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen and Turkey). They included four ministers and eight deputy ministers, as well as senior officials from Ministries of Education, Vocational Training and Labour. Seven EU member states were also officially represented (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Italy and the UK), as were six international organisations (European Commission, European Training Foundation, ILO, OECD, UNESCO and World Bank).

15. Three strategic choices were made from the start with respect to the conference agenda and participants – all presenting risks:

- to join general education and training under the auspices of one conference;
- to cast far and wide the net of issues to be discussed, thereby running the risk of spreading the discussions "too thin"; and
- to invite ministers, other policy makers *and* senior technical staff, thereby complicating programme design and logistics.

16. The Conference aimed to lay the foundation for a systematic and comparative review of secondary education and training in the countries of the region, and to promote increased international collaboration in support of this aim. The high level representation – ministers, their deputies and other senior policy makers – from relevant authorities throughout the region helped realise this goal. The Conference was focused on content, and the participants appeared genuinely involved in the issues and pleased to be part of a regional effort to extend knowledge on secondary education and training.

17. The Conference was not meant to result in specific recommendations for secondary education development in general, or secondary education in the region, but to serve as an eye opener – exposing participants to new ideas and increasing their awareness of other initiatives already taking place in the region and elsewhere in the world. Where education reforms are concerned, there is no single model or answer.

18. Finally, the Conference aimed at exploring common ground among the participants and, with it, finding possible areas for collaboration among countries, among regions and among support agencies.

19. This document is a summary of the rich discussions that took place during the Conference. Its objective is to present the different issues raised as fairly as possible, as well as whatever consensus emerged.

Thematic issues and preliminary conclusions

20. After an introductory plenary session addressing cross-cutting issues (regional labour markets, institutions and culture), the conference focused on issues in three areas affecting secondary education and training: (a) quality and relevance, (b) provision and finance, and (c) teachers and trainers. Eight working group sessions were organised around these issues: (a.1) occupational certification and training standards, (a.2) quality assessment, (a.3) curriculum and standards; (b.1) provision of secondary education and training, (b.2) financing of secondary education and training, (b.3) training funds; and (c.1) training of teachers and trainers and (c.2) status of teachers and trainers (see agenda in annex).

21. The opening session stressed that the success of the Conference would be judged on its ability to address openly and frankly the key issues facing secondary education and training. After two and a half days of exchanges during plenary sessions and small group discussions, five key issues were identified:

- merging of vocational and general education as core skills for employability rise;
- demand side financing and the financial sustainability of the sectors, as participation rates increase;
- teachers and professionals with certified quality, for international equivalence;
- participation in international efforts to monitor and assess education, for labour mobility; and
- transparency of information on performance, for accountability.

22. Throughout the Conference speakers made clear efforts to present their ideas and conclusions in a pragmatic, non ideological, manner. Three issues, however, were hotly debated during the discussions:

- the commonalities between secondary education and training were emphasised throughout the proceedings; however the notion that general education and vocational training ought to be “merged” was viewed with suspicion in some quarters;

- consensus emerged on the dangers of privatisation of education "at any cost"; however efforts are still needed to promote the dialogue on the "whys" and "hows" of the concept, with all their caveats; and
- the complementary dimensions of education were stressed - as a contributor to economic development, but also as a factor of political and social development, as well as social cohesion.

II. Quality and relevance

23. Safeguarding the relevance of what is taught is one of the main challenges of education. Although this is never easy, it may be argued that it is more difficult today than it was 50 years ago. Mass education demands that fairly generally-applicable training standards be set. Increasing mobility of the labour force requires standards and certifications to be understood by others than those directly involved in defining and using them. Rapid technological innovation requires standards to be flexible.

24. These simple statements raise more questions than they answer. Flexible standards may seem a contradiction in terms. Who should be responsible for setting and updating training standards? How narrowly should they be defined when the nature of the occupations they apply to changes rapidly? How are standards translated to educational practice? Who evaluates the curricula based on these standards?

Occupational certification and training standards

25. Two main issues dominated the discussions of this working group.

26. First, if the relevance of secondary education is to be ensured, all stakeholders in training need to be involved in the definition, evaluation and updating of training standards. Stakeholders include not only government and educators, but also those who receive students from the secondary education system, such as employers and post-secondary education institutions, and other key players in the labour market, such as social partners and labour offices. An important role is reserved for national authorities in this process as, ideally, they are the facilitators of collaboration among all stakeholders.

27. Second, whatever system is adopted for defining, updating and implementing training standards and certifications, it needs to be transparent because it needs to be used by numerous stakeholders from different backgrounds. Civil servants, educators, trainers, labour union officials and employers – their various interpretations of one concise description of the training requirements for a particular profession or the value of a particular certification need to be in agreement. Also, in an environment of increasing international mobility of labour, international partners need to be able to compare credentials from different countries. Professionals developing methodologies of standard and certification definition would be well-advised to take these considerations into account. International expertise can serve as an example for defining either an internationally common terminology or the key to a translation of a nationally consistent terminology.

Quality assessment

28. Quality assessment procedures can greatly enhance the internal drive towards self-improvement of an education system. They can also be devastatingly counter-productive. The question in the debate on quality control was not one on whether or not quality assessments are needed but one on how they ought to be carried out.

29. Consensus emerged on the need for quality assessment to be based on clearly defined targets and the relative performance of the system or parts thereof as measure of against these targets. The contentious issues were the definition of these targets and the methods of assessment.

30. The general perspective of modern education as the platform for learning to do, learning to learn, and learning to be forbids policy makers to limit educational targets to training standards solely based on occupational standards. For some professions this would narrow down the required curriculum to learning to do. Quality assessment must therefore not be limited to the degree to which the education sector is able to respond to the immediate needs of the labour market. Again, one way of ensuring that the needs of all stakeholders in education are satisfied, is by involving all in the process of establishing quality assurance measures.

31. The fact that different forms of assessment (from self-assessment by institutions to widely published rankings based on a variety of indicators) are used in different countries throughout the world shows that there is no international consensus on preferred methods.

32. Ultimately, quality assessment should be a means of lifting up the education system as a whole and not a means to promote the demise of individual schools performing below set standards. If serious measures (such as the publication of rankings) are attached to the results of quality assessment procedures it is imperative that the targets on which these assessments are based be as broad as possible. Punitively used narrow assessments can distort educational programmes by creating strong incentives to focus only on those indicators that are being measured.

Curriculum and standards

33. Once identified and described, training standards need to be translated into curricula. The working group discussing this process also called for an intensification of the links between the world of education and the world of work. Social partner involvement in the development and the evaluation of curricula can be a way, if not the only way, of safeguarding their relevance.

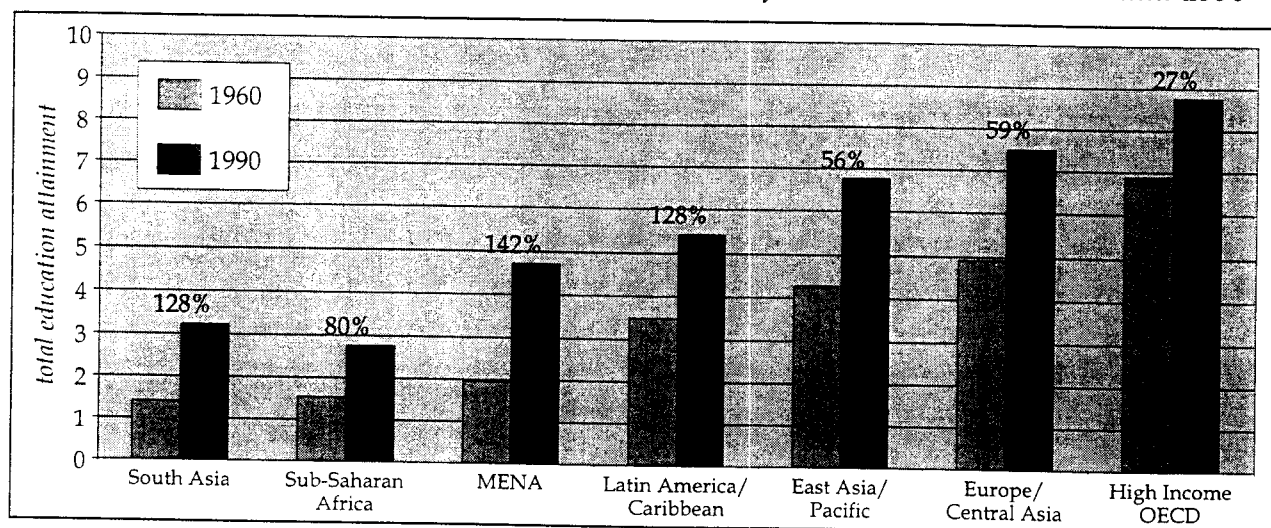
34. Acknowledging the changing requirements of labour markets, the group identified the need to move from a skills-based to a competencies-based approach. While the emphasis has long been on teaching students to master a set of technical skills, particularly in vocational education, more emphasis needs to be placed on training the capacity to acquire new skills later in life. In this context co-ordination between the initial education sector and providers of continuing education and in-service training is also imperative.

35. Finally, as the described changes to the nature of vocational curricula are likely to bring it closer to general-secondary education, improved physical connections (allowing student movement between the systems) and increased co-operation between these two sectors are needed.

III. Provision and finance

36. Education for all, though generally considered one of the foundations of modern societies, is not cheap and even less so in our age where rapid technological changes continuously increase and change the range of basic competencies required by young people. This is even more relevant in a region with explosive demographic growth.

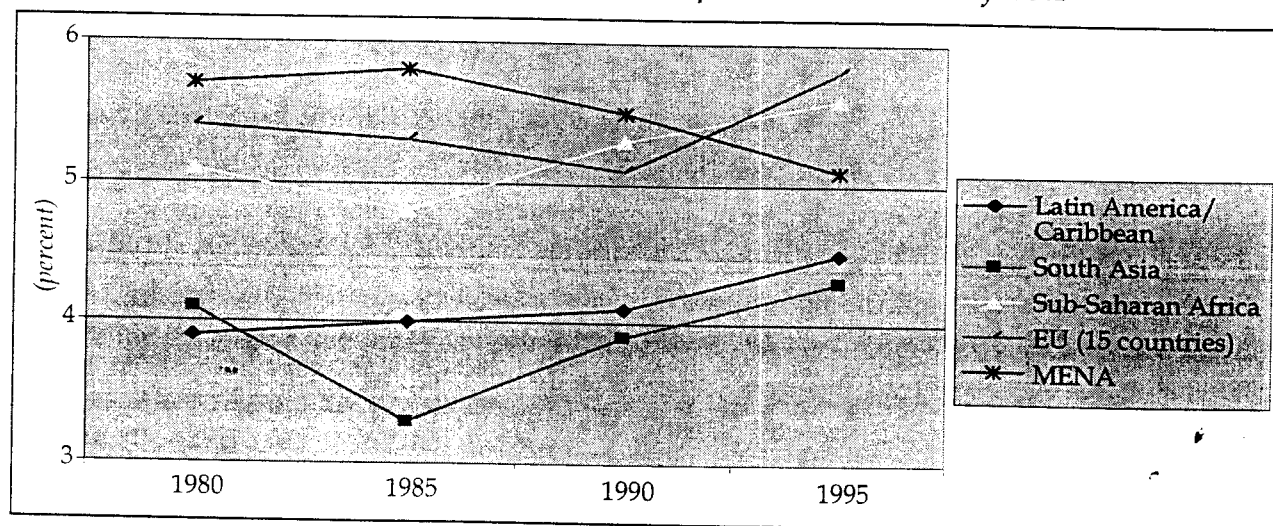
Figure 2: Growth in educational attainment of over 15's between 1960 and 1990



Source: World Bank, 2000

37. Educational attainment in the Middle East and North Africa has increased faster than in any other region in the world. This has put pressures on education budgets. In general, education expenditure in real terms has increased throughout the last two decades and although expenditure as a percentage of GDP seems to show a downward trend, in most countries it is still above the world average of 5%.

Figure 3: Public education expenditure as share of GNP



Source: UNESCO, 1993 and 1998

38. One of the core questions raised in Turin was how quality secondary education and training can be made accessible to all and extended to ages 14-16 when, in a region with large demographic growth, any effort in this direction will present capacity and budgetary problems and will need to be accompanied by measures to ensure that better educated cohorts can be gainfully employed.

The example of Southeast Asia

Most studies show that in East Asia economic growth led growth in education rather than vice versa. In Thailand and Korea, capital, wisely invested, created jobs which in turn created a demand for more education. In these countries, the governments saw that they needed to constrain demand for secondary and higher education. They achieved this mostly by streaming. In Korea, streaming was achieved through examinations, in Thailand it was achieved by limiting the supply of study places. Until five years ago, only some 40% of Thai 'middle school' graduates went on to secondary schools. By limiting the supply of places they were able to control youth unemployment and also to keep the education budget mostly for primary education.

In these countries in the 1970s and 1980s, most people were trained in traditional manufacturing. The vast majority of vocational graduates got jobs and even today vocational graduates make more money than general secondary school graduates.

Now, changes in workplace practice resulting from, among others, the introduction of computers, global marketing arrangements, and manufacturing partnerships have dramatically altered the skills required by the labour market. This is forcing governments to rethink their education arrangements.

The most striking issue here is that the problems faced by these countries as a result of the development of a knowledge-based society are the same as those faced elsewhere in the world. Curricula which have been in place and had been appropriate for many decades need to be changed but no one knows yet how exactly this needs to be done.

Provision

39. Choices made by governments to balance the provision of different types of education are often more guided by historical, cultural and financial motives than by the changing social needs of young people and the actual needs of the labour market. More often than not, in less industrialised countries structured labour market research is carried out haphazardly, if at all. In the Middle East and North Africa a recurrent critical characteristic is the large proportion of the labour force employed in the public sector. This means that governments are important 'customers' of the education sector, while the public sector is less exposed to the pressure of international trade and therefore less likely to be a frontline advocate for innovation. This latter feature is likely to have to change in the near future.

40. Another challenge confronting educational policy makers in the region became evident during the Conference. A large proportion of the population is employed in very small enterprises, often in the informal sector or on its fringes. This is a sector which is both difficult to control and whose needs are hard to assess, while at the same time it is very sensitive to the effects of international competition. To compound the problems further, political forces are often reluctant to appreciate the existence and importance of the informal sector. But the informal sector is an area with important entrepreneurial potential and the effort required to formalise it can be measured, at least partly, in training needs.

41. The importance of the informal sector, the low representation of hi-tech industries in the region, the small number of job opportunities for both the unskilled and the academically trained, and even the high representation of the civil service on the labour market all suggest that efforts to strengthen mid-level qualifications ought to be a priority. This was confirmed by Conference participants.

42. At the Conference, government influence on education was a disputed issue. Nevertheless, and despite the administrative tradition in many of the countries concerned, it seemed to be broadly accepted that the role of the government in education should be one of supervision and strategic management of the system as a whole.

43. Taken from there, national authorities, as executive bodies representing the full breadth of the population they govern should be ultimately responsible for controlling the balance between the (labour market) demand-driven side of education and its social role. They should facilitate and maintain the dialogue between the different stakeholders in education and provide the channels required by the labour market to express its needs and grant education providers (whether public or private) the necessary autonomy to adapt quickly to changing demands. This could be done by revising the regulatory and legal environment governing secondary education and training and its institutions, by the integration of regulating authorities (ministries of education and labour, and sector ministries), and by streamlining the national management of secondary education and training provision through one body so as to achieve coherence in strategy definition and management.

44. Furthermore, the role of private education and other training providers as an innovative force and as a supplementary training pool was discussed.

Streaming

45. One of the measures by which authorities can aim to influence the balance between supply and demand in the labour market is by controlling differentiation of secondary education into various tracks and the age at which this differentiation is introduced (streaming). Streaming is a controversial issue as it is judged by some as compromising the social role of education. Conference participants heard proposals advocating abolishment of streaming altogether and postponing any professional training to the post-secondary level, as well as proposals to increase streaming in order to guarantee the supply of skilled school leavers required by the labour market.

46. The relevance of streaming in secondary education appears to be an issue which depends highly on the country's educational attainment. In countries where the average number of years of compulsory schooling is low, early streaming may be a more valid option than in countries where education is obligatory until age 16.

47. Obviously, the validity of streaming is also highly dependent on the extent to which different streams are narrowed or specialised, and on the extent to which horizontal links between the different specialised branches of education are developed.

48. It was suggested by participants that for the region the option of non-streamed secondary education systems was only valid if the skills and knowledge taught through secondary general education were adapted to ensure a balanced blend of technical, more professionally oriented skills and more theoretical knowledge. Countries considering or already implementing such a non-streaming option reported the need for a move towards a certain professionalisation of general secondary education for all. This was deemed necessary to ensure that secondary school leavers not

pursuing any further formal education or training would acquire the minimum core of general and professional skills needed to participate in the labour market and to be prepared for continuing education should this become necessary at a later stage.

49. Also the way in which professional skills are taught is an issue to which a solution needs to be sought in the industrial or economic context of each individual country. In a labour market with a high demand for narrowly defined skills, there will be ample opportunity for apprenticeship schemes and alternating (formal) education. As the demand for narrowly skilled labour decreases and uncertainty in the labour market increases, the argument for extending alternatives to a life-long practice will increase.

Financing

50. Primary and general secondary education in the Middle East and North Africa are predominantly funded by the State. The private education sector is growing in most countries. Vocational education expenditure is generally shared by government, companies (insofar these are not government owned) and students. The contributions of the latter two groups vary widely from country to country.

51. Participants confirmed that most countries in the Middle East and North Africa use governmental auditing systems to monitor educational expenditure by individual institutions. Although the topic of returns to investments in (secondary) education is a widely debated issue, mechanisms for performance monitoring are virtually absent. If sufficient financial information were available and could be measured against educational performance indicators, expenditure could be rationalised through financial quotas but there is a general lack of data on financing. When it is available, it is often not detailed enough to be used for monitoring and evaluation.

52. Government funds are generally distributed directly to the institutions but the calculation parameters vary widely. Participants reported that quantitative parameters are most commonly used. Some countries (e.g. Tunisia) use programme contracts. With some exceptions (e.g. Tunisia), the concepts of vouchers and training funds are as yet largely unexplored.

53. International experience has proved that financing mechanisms based on quantitative parameters can be effectively supplemented by incentives based on qualitative ones, such as performance indicators. There was, however, broad agreement at the Conference that such incentives can only be successful in an environment in which there is transparency in both financial and performance terms at the school and system levels. Furthermore, the accountability of individual education and training institutions presupposes a higher degree of autonomy than most schools in the region currently have.

Rationalising educational management

54. The provision of education is not the only strain on educational budgets. Streamlining educational management, both at the local level and at the governmental level, can also relieve the pressure considerably. At the Conference, one particularly notable issue in this respect was the apparent lack of co-ordination among different authorities (ministries of education, labour, etc.). By streamlining education and training management and policy development among different authorities, the waste of human, material and financial resources can be avoided. And there are more good reasons to streamline human resources development strategy at the national level.

Social partnership

55. Education needs to satisfy both the social needs of the individual and the training needs of a country's (or increasingly the world's) labour market. In order to ensure that maximum efforts are made to accommodate these needs, a continuing, effective and balanced dialogue among all stakeholders is imperative.

56. It became clear during the Conference that the organisation of stakeholders, such as through tri-partite consultation mechanisms, will be a persistent feature of the educational debate in the Middle East and North Africa. The dominance of SMEs and the importance of the informal sector mean that there is little history of industrial organisation and that, even today, some stakeholders may be extremely hard to organise or represent.

57. This was an issue of major concern. The further exploration of ways to increase the involvement of all stakeholders and share international experience in motivating the private sector was generally welcomed.

IV. Teachers and trainers

58. In many countries, both in the industrialised world and in the developing world, the teaching profession is under pressure. While teachers are more than ever deserving of respect for carrying out their difficult tasks under difficult circumstances, their status is in decline. Most teachers impart knowledge and experience which can earn them a higher income, more recognition and better career development prospects elsewhere. Those who remain in the profession face the daunting task of using changing teaching methods to teach a changing 'audience' rapidly changing subjects. Many have chosen to abandon teaching altogether and the permanent threat of others following in their tracks makes the issue of the development of teacher and trainer training a matter of extreme urgency.

59. The changing role of education is changing the role of those providing education. As much as other professionals, teachers need continued training to be able to successfully assume their new roles – as facilitators more than as instructors. As is the case with other professions, training needs for teachers and trainers, both pre-service and in-service, need to be identified and occupational standards need to be defined or adjusted.

60. This is, however, unlikely to be sufficient. The lurking shortage of trainers and teachers demands an all-out effort to increase the attraction of the profession for young graduates. To achieve this, some of the pitfalls of the profession need to be addressed.

61. These pitfalls have been identified on earlier occasions for countries in other parts of the world and the discussion in the working group on the topic in Turin showed that they are valid also in the context of the Middle East and North Africa. Problem areas appear to be remuneration, school facilities, qualifications, professional development, flexibility in career choice and public recognition. Lower remuneration than that of jobs with similar demands in the private sector is often quoted first. However, although similar research for the region has not yet been carried out, studies conducted in Europe show that pay is not always the most decisive factor. Although in countries with lower living standards this may be quite different, it is worth observing that in Europe insufficient recognition and scope for professional development are quoted by teachers as the main reasons for dissatisfaction.

62. The general consensus in the working group in Turin seemed to be that, again, closer collaboration between industry and education offers the best opportunities for relieving the pressure on the profession. Including enterprise training activities as part of teachers' programmes can help increase earnings and provide a more varied and challenging working day, while organising exchanges among teachers and those employed in industry can provide added value to classroom practice as well as simultaneously offering an opportunity for teachers to update their knowledge and skills. As both parties involved stand to benefit from such exchanges, their schemes are promising and worth investigating.

63. It was recommended to increase networking among training institutions and perhaps even individual teachers and trainers in order to accelerate the effects of reform activities. Sharing experiences internationally can shortcut some of the laborious tasks involved in defining occupational standards for teachers and trainers and their translation into pre-service and in-service training curricula.

64. Finally, special attention needs to be given to the role of school principals in the process of change and to stepping up the integration of new technologies in teacher and trainer training.

V. Conclusions

65. As stated earlier, concrete recommendations were neither expected nor made. The Turin Conference served as a platform for discussion, among policy makers, on trends in secondary education development and as an opportunity to strengthen regional and international links.

66. The Conference, however, *did* succeed in rearranging an extremely complex problem into a clear set of issues which will need further attention.

67. Educating young people in a volatile environment, where skill requirements for jobs fluctuate at the speed of market changes and technological developments, requires both flexibility in what is learned and how it is taught. In the years ahead, education is likely to move increasingly from teaching skills for performing activities to teaching the skills needed to acquire new skills.

68. The same applies to the social context of education. Rather than teaching young people how to live in a particular environment, teaching them how to cope with a changing environment will better prepare them for continued development.

69. It is deemed important to reconsider the extent to which general and vocational education are to be kept separate. Each country (or collaborating set of countries) needs to establish whether in their specific situation some merging of the two systems would be desirable or not. Such a decision needs to be supported by a clearly defined rationale, developed through a wide debate among all stakeholders in education.

70. There is broad agreement that the role of national authorities in education should be one of supervision and strategic management of the system as a whole, controlling the balance between the demand-driven side of education and its social role. They should facilitate and maintain the dialogue between the different stakeholders in education.

71. It is imperative to find new ways of financing education and training if secondary education for all is to be pursued or even extended to include age groups currently not covered by the formal education system, including adults with their increasing need for continued training. All stakeholders in education – government, industry, social partners, parents and students – ought to be involved in this debate; their potential as partial funders of the education system must be considered carefully. The success of their involvement depends largely on the extent to which performance indicators and financial parameters can be made accessible to them in a transparent way. Regional and international experience and good practice in this field can greatly contribute to finding new ways of financing education.

72. However hard this may be in a region with little tradition in industrial organisation, methods and mechanisms for consulting and involving the full range of stakeholders in education development need to be devised. This is equally valid for vocational education and training as it is for general secondary education. This issue needs to be seen in relation to point 3 above.

73. The debate on quality and relevance of education needs to be supported by financial, education and labour market statistics and requires the involvement of all stakeholders in education, with possibly a facilitating role for national authorities.

74. Industrialised countries are currently paying the price for having underestimated the role of teachers in the educational innovation process. As the role of teachers changes under the influence of new technologies and new teaching methods and as the status of the profession decreases with the move from elite to mass education, new ways of improving the attraction of the profession need to be found and facilities to support increased training and retraining of teachers need to be established or strengthened.

Further co-operation

75. It was made clear by participants from different backgrounds that assistance in the form of traditional development co-operation is not required. There are unique features of both cultural and educational traditions and the labour markets in the region which argue strongly against indiscriminate application of solutions found in Europe and North America. One good example of the latter is the importance in the region of the informal sector which is of a scale neither Europe nor North America has experienced in recent times.

76. At the same time it was acknowledged that good practice and experience gathered in industrialised countries can be useful if carefully studied rather than simply projected. Indeed, ignoring the many lessons learned the hard way in other parts of the world would be a waste of resources in its own right. Collaboration with European and North American countries could be particularly fruitful (and in some cases even imperative) in tackling the effects of globalisation on industry and local labour markets.

77. The prospects for fruitful regional co-operation, on the other hand, are promising and the Conference can be commended for offering an opportunity for starting the establishment of regional networks. Although it was only a first step in the right direction, the conference showed that there is a will to co-operate on a regional basis and a genuine belief in the usefulness of such collaboration. This needs to be encouraged.

Annex I

Education indicators

	Ministries with education authority*	Years of compulsory education	Percent of children of school age (6-14 years) mid-1990s	Adult literacy rate (15 years and over) 1990	Primary GER	Secondary GER	Tertiary GER
Algeria	4	9	95	4.0	107	62	11
Egypt**	4	8	84	4.3	100	74	18
Iran**	4	12	97	3.9	99	69	15
Iraq	2	6	79	4.0	90	44	-
Jordan	4	10	100	6.0	94	65	18
Lebanon**	3	6	96	-	109	76	29
Morocco****	3	6	54	2.5	83	39	11
Syria	3	6	91	5.1	101	44	18
Tunisia	3	-	97	3.9	116	61	13
Palestinian Authority***	2	10	-	8.0	92	66	-
Yemen	2	9	50	1.5	60	27	10

Sources: UNESCO 1997, Barro and Lee 1996, World Bank 1997, Palestinian Authority 1996, National Centre for Human Resources Development (www.hchrd.gov.jo), World Bank 1998, World Bank staff calculation using data from FAFO 1993 and 1996.

* Technical ministries (e.g. Ministries of Agriculture or Public Works) responsible for technical training programmes applicable only to their own areas are not included. Ministry of Health Authority for medical education is included. For Egypt and Syria, ministries responsible for religious education are included.

** Egyptian tertiary GER and all Iranian GERs are 1994 data; Lebanese secondary and tertiary GERs are 1993 data.

*** Palestinian Authority years of schooling for 1992. GERs are arithmetic averages for females and males.

**** In Morocco basic education starts at age 7.

Annex II

Agenda

Knowledge and skills for development: The role of secondary education and training in the Middle East and North Africa

Lingotto Conference Centre, Turin 7-10 May 2000

Agenda

Sunday, 7th May

18:30	Opening ceremony <div style="text-align: right;">Sala Londra</div> <div style="text-align: right;">(in Arabic, English, French, Italian)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A. de Villepin, European Commission, General Directorate External Relations ■ N. Pyres, European Commission, General Directorate Education and Culture ■ M. Lockheed, Education Sector Manager, World Bank (WB) ■ P. de Rooij, Director, European Training Foundation (ETF) ■ Representatives from Municipality of Torino and Provincia
	Buffet dinner at Lingotto

Monday, 8th May

8:00	Registration of participants
9:00-11:00	Opening Session <div style="text-align: right;">Sala Londra</div> <div style="text-align: right;">(in Arabic, English, French, Italian)</div>

-	<p>Chair: K. Younes (Algeria)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduction to the conference – F. Steier (WB), O. Ramsayer (ETF) ■ Regional economic developments and labour markets – M. Nabli (WB) ■ Role of institutions and culture – R. Pearson (Canada) <p>Discussants: M. Touq (United Nations Relief and Works Agency – UNRWA), L. Pescia (ETF)</p>
11:00-11:20	Coffee break
11:20-11:45	Welcome by Giovanni Manzini, Under Secretary of State, Italian Ministry of Education
11:45-13:15	<p>Session I – Quality and relevance of secondary education and training Sala Londra (in Arabic, English, French, Italian)</p> <p>Chair: M. Al Tayeb (Yemen)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secondary education in transition economies: rethinking the framework – D. Fretwell (WB) ■ Building integrated education and training systems – J. Castejon (ETF) <p>Discussants: J. Middleton (WB), L. Gallino (Italy), M. Masri (Jordan)</p>
13:15-14:45	Lunch
14:45-15:40	<p>Continuation of Plenary Session 1 Sala Londra (in Arabic, English, French, Italian)</p> <p>Chair: M. Al Tayeb (Yemen)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quality assessment and certification – B. McGaw (OECD) ■ Training and work in the informal sector of developing countries: issues and good practice – F. Fluitman (ILO) <p>Discussants: J. Middleton (WB), L. Gallino (Italy), M. Masri (Jordan)</p>
15:40-16:00	Coffee break
16:00-18:00	<p>Working group sessions (3 groups, in English, French)</p> <p>Sala Londra Group 1 – Occupational certification and training standards Chair: O. Ramsayer (ETF) Resource Person: A. Benedek (Hungary) Rapporteurs: G. Hakim (WB), B. Chakroun (Tunisia)</p> <p>Sala Parigi Group 2 – Quality assessment Chair: M. Lockheed (WB) Resource Person: M. McKerracher (United Kingdom) Rapporteurs: E. Jimeno Sicilia (ETF), S. Shahin (Palestinian Authority)</p> <p>Sala Roma Group 3 – Curriculum and standards Chair: C. Pair (France) Resource Person: M. Diehl (Germany) Rapporteurs: J.-M. Castejon (ETF), M. Siafa (Algeria)</p>
20:30	Dinner offered by Province of Turin

Tuesday, 9th May

8:30-11:00	<p>Session II – Provision and finance of secondary education and training (in Arabic, English, French, Italian) Sala Londra</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> H. Kuhail (Palestinian Authority)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education/training market and labour market: the need for regulation – J. Mazeran (France) ■ From supply- to demand-driven VET: the role of enterprises and other social partners in triggering the paradigm shift – M. Diehl (Germany) ■ Apprenticeship and 'alternance' training schemes, opportunities and challenges: the private sector's view – G. Roussel (France) ■ Accountability and finance – H. Thomas (United Kingdom) <p><i>Discussants:</i> C. Pair (France), A. Ali Sayed (Egypt)</p>
11:00-11:30	Coffee break
11.30-13.00	<p>Round Table – Regional experiences in secondary educational and training: experiences of innovation (in Arabic, English, French, Italian) Sala Londra</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> F. Steier, World Bank</p>
13:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30-16:30	<p>Working group sessions Sala Londra, Parigi, Roma (including coffee break at 15:30) (3 groups, in English, French)</p> <p>Group 1 – Provision of secondary education and training <i>Chair:</i> K. Tsolakidis (Greece) <i>Resource Person:</i> J. Mazeran (France) <i>Rapporteurs:</i> T. Linden (World Bank), N. Yesilmen (Turkey)</p> <p>Group 2 – Financing of secondary education and training <i>Chair:</i> J. Middleton (WB) <i>Resource Person:</i> H. Thomas (United Kingdom) <i>Rapporteurs:</i> A. Vos (ETF), T. Al-Nahr (Jordan)</p> <p>Group 3 – Training funds <i>Chair:</i> F. Fluitman (ILO) <i>Resource Person:</i> J.P. Péresson (France) <i>Rapporteurs:</i> B. Ramadan (WB), N. Naccache (Lebanon)</p>
16:45-18:15	<p>Session III – Teachers and trainers Sala Londra (in Arabic, English, French, Italian)</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> El Baz El Baz (Egypt)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building in quality in the education workforce : the importance of standards, integration, and alignment – M. Pearlman (USA) ■ The professionalisation of trainers : evolution tendencies in the European Union – M. Brugia (CEDEFOP) <p><i>Discussants:</i> B. Buck (ETF), F. Tarhouni (Tunisie)</p>
20:30	Dinner at the European Training Foundation

Wednesday, 10th May

8:30-10:30	<p>Working group sessions</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sala Londra, Parigi, Roma (2 groups, in English, French)</p> <p>Group 1 – Training: teachers and trainers <i>Chair:</i> L. Wilson (ETF) <i>Resource Person:</i> B. Buck (ETF), M. Brugia (CEDEFOP) <i>Rapporteurs:</i> M. Waiser (WB), B. Chakroun (Tunisia)</p> <p>Group 2 – Status: teachers and trainers <i>Chair:</i> W. Lentsch (Austria) <i>Resource Person:</i> H. Al-Sadah (Bahrain) <i>Rapporteurs:</i> E. Robert-Schweitzer (WB), A. Sadri (Iran)</p>
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-13:30	<p>Closing session</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sala Londra (in Arabic, English, French, Italian)</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> M. Al-Rasheed (Saudi Arabia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conference framework: F. Steier (WB) ■ Reports from working group sessions by rapporteurs ■ Open discussion ■ Preliminary conclusions: S. Heyneman (USA) ■ Next steps: M. Lockheed (WB), P. de Rooij (ETF)
13:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30-16:00	Open space

Annex III

List of participants

MEDA/MENA Region

Algérie	Abdelazia Boudiaf Conseiller au Cabinet du Ministre Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle	Akila Chergou Directeur d'Etudes Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle
	Benkhallef Hocine Sous Directeur de la Publication Conseil Supérieur de l'Education	Toumi Larbi Directeur d'Etudes Conseil Supérieur de l'Education
	Mounira Siafa Chargée d'Etudes Conseil Supérieur de l'Education	S.E. M. Karim Younes Ministre de la Formation Professionnelle Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle
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Jordan	Muffed Al-Abdullah Secretary General Ministry of Education	Tayseer Al-Nahar Vice-President National Centre for Human Resources Development
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	Nic Vandermarliere Cabinet of the Minister of Education Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap	
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	Richard Pietrasik Chief Executive Scottish Council for Education Technology (SCET)	

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	Marlaine Lockheed Education Sector Manager World Bank	Michael Mertaugh Principal Economist/ Turkey Country Office World Bank
	Bassam Ramadan Senior Economist/ Lebanon Country Office World Bank	Eluned Roberts-Schweitzer Education Specialist World Bank
	Ferda Sahmali Human Development Specialist - ECCTR World Bank Turkey Country Office	Francis Steier Senior Education Economist World Bank
	Myriam Waiser Education Specialist World Bank Institute	

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