

Kristin Halvorsen's presentation 5th March

Good morning,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, friends in education and training,

All people, in all parts of the world, want a good life for themselves and their families. Every one of us hopes for a life free from hunger, health problems, violence and poverty.

Education and training can be instrumental in creating social and economic development, and improve living conditions for individuals and population groups. This is the overriding theme for this seminar.

For the individual, the obvious way to avoid poverty is to generate an income, either by wage work, or by own production of goods or services that someone is prepared to pay for.

Societies can rise from poverty when a large number of individuals participate in production, receive an income, and spend the money on goods or services produced by others.

Economic and social growth is created when money circulates between many individuals.

If everybody pays tax on their income, the authorities will get the necessary economic basis for gradually development and provision of health and education services to the population.

Ensuring that as many as possible are enabled to earn an income, is probably the most effective way to promote equality in a population.

For a person to create an income, she needs various knowledge and skills. These are gained through **learning**.

Learning takes place everywhere, throughout life, in the family, in local society, among friends, and at the workplace.

No doubt, most of the learning takes place outside school. But the learning that takes place in school, within organized education and training, is systematic and targeted.

It is meant to ensure that all children and youth develop values, knowledge and skills that are necessary for the individual's further development and realization of a good life.

For several decades, the partners in international development cooperation have joined forces to ensure primary education for all children and youth. The massive efforts have given good results. The Global Monitoring Report 2012 documented that the number of out-of-school children has been reduced by almost 50% from the year 2000, despite rapid population growth.

But there are still serious challenges in primary education. The quality of education must be improved. Particular efforts are needed to reach children in countries at war and other critical situations, to groups of disabled, and to girls in societies where women are at disadvantage.

Obviously, enough teachers, and well qualified teachers are a most critical factor for realization of a high quality education for everyone. Today, we lack almost two million teachers, and many teachers are not fully qualified for the work they do. Thus, the international education partners need to intensify the work to recruit and qualify more teachers, and to retain those who are already in the system.

We will learn more about the teacher issues in a little while. And I am confident that we will hear more also about the other challenges that I mentioned earlier, during this seminar.

The overall goal of international development cooperation is a world without poverty, and countries that do not need to receive development support, inhabited by individuals that are qualified for contributing to the national production and further social life. To achieve this, more than primary / very basic education is needed.

The number of unemployed young people is growing in all parts of the world. For each individual, unemployment is a personal and economic disaster. They become an economic burden and source of social unrest.

The frustration can lead to political and violent revolt, as recently experienced in some Arabic countries. For every country, high youth unemployment is in fact a serious waste of very important resources!

Qualifying young people for the world of work has until recently not been a priority in the Education for All agenda. Today, we look forward to a presentation that will document the needs in low-income countries for training of youth. We will also learn how a nation, by targeted and strategic investments in education and training, can achieve impressive and rapid economic growth, and social and technological development.

A third perspective is the one of companies wanting to establish in low-income countries, how they experience the difficulties when searching for local, qualified labor, and how the lack of access to qualified labor can hamper an intended development. But we will also learn how companies themselves can contribute to qualifying local youth.

This is a national consultation seminar. The purpose is to gather and forward advice regarding the role of education and training in the global post-2015 development goals, from different groups with interests in this area.

The presentations today focus mainly on the development of skills for work. But other major issues, including the universal right of every child to receive basic education, have not been forgotten or put aside. We hope that the advice from this consultation seminar will have an influence on the international negotiations on the next set of development goals.

But the next few hours will under no circumstances be a waste of time. The sharing of ideas, perspectives and experiences will be

valuable, also in the Norwegian debates on education and training issues. Many thanks to the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, to Union of Education Norway, and to UNICEF, for organizing this seminar!

I wish for all of us some very interesting hours, and am looking forward to our further cooperation on the development of quality education and training both in Norway and in the international development cooperation.

Thank you for your attention!