SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 66TH SESSION

Held from 15th November to 17 November 2000
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1. The Committee ADOPTED the Draft Annotated Agenda.


2. The Committee APPROVED the Summary Record.

ITEM 3: ORAL STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR, including progress report on CO-OPERATION WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

3. The Director reported on recent events and future meetings.

4. The Committee NOTED the oral report on:
   ✓ Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level in June 2000;
   ✓ Education reviews in member countries [Norway on lifelong learning, Switzerland on tertiary education, Finland on polytechnics] and in non-Member countries [China on tertiary education, Romania on education policies]. Following education reviews in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania an Education Committee review meeting took place in Helsinki in June 2000. Reviews are also taking place in Bulgaria and Russia.
   ✓ Forthcoming conferences: Student experience in using ICT, Aix-en-Provence, 8-9 December; Finding resources for lifelong learning, Ottawa, 7-8 December; Gender Mainstreaming: Competitiveness and Growth, OECD, Paris 23-24 November.

[For reference: Note by the Secretary-General on OECD Challenges and Strategic Objectives 2000/2001, C(2000)166]

5. The Director advised the Committee that its programme was one of those targeted for a minus three per cent cut in the Secretary-General’s list being considered by the Budget Committee. Delegates voiced their disappointment following the cuts to Part I funds for work on education in recent years. Several commented that the proposed cut seemed inconsistent with the high profile given to education, for the first time in 2000, in an MCM Communiqué. The Swiss delegates proposed that, rather than reducing the level of funding for activity 2.6 on “New mechanisms to facilitate private financing”, it be dropped entirely with the residual resources being redirected to supplement those already allocated to a high-priority activity.

6. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:
   • NOTED the proposals for the +3 and -3 per cent options prepared by the Secretariat in line with the Committee’s decision at its Spring 2000 meeting and comments made;
   • EXPRESSED disappointment that the Secretary-General had recommended that funds be taken from the work on Education, after the successive cuts that had been sustained in recent years; and
• NOTED the Secretariat will inform delegates of the outcome of the discussion on priorities and resource allocation in the Budget Committee and that they would have an opportunity to return to this issue, if necessary, in the new year.

ITEM 5: EDUCATION INDICATORS

B. Conclusions of the eighth meeting of the INES Steering Group, Tokyo, 10th September. [DEELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000016)]

7. In introducing this item the Deputy Director encouraged delegates to focus their comments on the priorities for future work and on the management structures for INES.

Directions for future work

8. Several delegates expressed caution about extending the range of activities and a strong preference for consolidation of existing work. Further improvement in the comparability of financial statistics was one example. Another was a continued focus on 15 year-olds in surveys of student learning, rather than the addition of a new population such as 10 year-olds. Some countries proposed extension of the competencies surveyed to include additional general competencies such as: ICT literacy and the social sciences, as well as a consideration of the role of teachers and teaching and the impact of educational processes on educational outcomes. There was support for further surveys of adult competencies, to extend work in this domain beyond that done in the International Adult Literacy Survey and forthcoming in the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills survey, and a request for clear proposals regarding the scope and time scale of this work.

9. Many delegates were in favour of an extension of work on labour market and on social outcomes of investment in education and, in particular, on the relationship between human and social capital and such outcomes.

10. All speakers agreed that equity should be mainstreamed across all networks and were opposed to the establishment of a separate network.

11. A strong interest in “country profiles” to improve policy relevance was expressed, on the understanding they would be developed in close collaboration with the Secretariat.

12. Co-operation with other international organisations was encouraged, especially IEA and the European Commission. Regarding dissemination, there was strong support for making INES material available on the Internet. (The Secretariat informed the Committee that statistical information is already available on the web and delegates were encouraged to visit the site [http://www.oecd.org/els/edu/eag98/]. With different levels of subscription, access can be gained to all of OECD’s data or only those of specific interest, such as the statistics and indicators on education.)

Management Structure

13. The Deputy Director outlined the key features of the proposed new structure: i) consideration of the work on indicators in a joint meeting of the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board (achieved by overlap of the latter part of one meeting with the beginning of the other) instead of duplicated discussion in separate meetings; and ii) establishment of a Strategic Management Group (SMG) to act as an Executive Committee for the joint meeting.
14. The Committee welcomed the initiative to discuss indicators at future meetings in a joint session with the CERI Governing Board. The Committee strongly endorsed the proposed new management structure that would strengthen its role (and that of the CERI Governing Board) in the indicator work and go a long way in improving transparency and strengthen the involvement at the political level. The following observations were made:

15. The SMG should not be too small and it was therefore suggested that four (instead of the three proposed) members be elected each from the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board and, thereafter as proposed, two members from the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee. The Chair would be elected from among the members of the SMG. Given the fact that the education mandate expires on 31 December 2001, the Group would be initially elected for one year though, assuming continuation of the work, it was intended that there be initial terms of different lengths and a deliberate policy of rotation of membership.

16. Given that the members of the SMG would be drawn from the Committees and the CERI Governing Board, some speakers asked whether it would be possible to have experts present as advisers. The Deputy Director emphasised that, since the role of the SMG would be to review proposals for work on indicators and to make recommendations to the joint meeting of the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board, policy expertise would be more important than technical expertise but added that the SMG could invite experts to participate in any particular discussion if it wished to have technical advice. In response to a particular question about whether members could be accompanied by national technical experts, the Director said it would be possible but emphasised that only the members of the SMG would be able to participate in the group’s discussion.

17. Delegates asked that documentation for the SMG be made available to all members of the three committees well in advance, to give them the possibility of forwarding comments to the Group before it meets. Other speakers asked that all the documentation be shared also with the national co-ordinators.

18. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- **NOTED** the importance of the PISA work and the need to move forward cautiously, while further developing measures of cross-curricular competencies, and giving greater attention to the role of teachers and focussing on factors which affect educational success;

- **NOTED** the general support for consolidation of the existing indicators for improving their comparability and for strengthening the conceptual and theoretical base;

- **NOTED** the calls for further developmental work on adult learning and social and economic returns to education;

- **NOTED** the need for the development of more trend data and for more analysis and use of the indicators in general;

- **RE-EMPHASISED** the need for a strong link to policy and **INDICATED** its support for the idea of "country profiles", which needed to be developed in collaboration with countries;

- **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to mainstream “equity” in existing networks and not via a new network or working group;

- **ENDORSED** the Secretariat proposal to have a joint half-day session of the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board to discuss work on indicators;
• **SUPPORTED** the idea of more strategic and transparent management of INES and in particular, the proposal to set up a Strategic Management Group (SMG) to replace the existing INES Steering Group and the proposal to elect four delegates from the Education Committee, four from the CERI Governing Board and two from the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee; and

• **NOTED** that the Director will be writing to the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board in the near future regarding nominations to the SMG.

**ITEM 6: HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SUSTAINED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Reconciling New Economies and Societies: The Role of Human and Social Capital*  

19. Mr. Tom Healy (CERI), introduced the first complete draft of the report, a summary of which had been well received by the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee at its October meeting. Mr. Healy advised the Committee of the intention to publish the revised report in March 2001, after which it will serve as a background document to the Education Ministerial meeting in April and the Council Ministerial meeting in May.

20. Overall, delegates reacted very positively to the presentation and the draft report. The discussion focussed on the following main points:

i) Many delegations appreciated the fact that the report offers a new way of understanding the links between civil society and the economy. The approach taken in the report, they felt, has substantial implications for policymakers in all sorts of policy fields as well as raising serious questions about what kinds of schools, neighbourhoods would be desirable.

ii) Many delegates agreed that the OECD was in a unique position to explain the complex links between these elements and how they contribute to well-being generally. Within this perspective, coherence between economic and social policy was deemed important.

iii) Some delegates stressed the importance of making the report more relevant to policymakers, to ministers and to practitioners and not just to the academic community. Thus, drawing out the practical concrete relevance of this work was key.

iv) It was suggested that some future work give consideration to cultural differences – especially as it relates to Asian societies.

v) Delegates emphasised the connection to investment in lifelong learning as a means of improving human and social capital and requested that this point be elaborated further.

vi) Some delegates applauded the fact that the report calls attention to the necessity for articulated policies among different social policy ministries and other responsible persons, while also raising the issue of the limits of policy and the necessity of intervention of other social actors.

21. Delegations welcomed the opportunity to provide comments on the draft of the report.

22. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:
• WELCOMED the report with its emphasis on a broad range of policy concerns and the inter-
relationship between learning, social networks and norms;

• AGREED that the report should be revised to reflect more concisely key policy messages and 
questions, as well as a greater emphasis on the link between lifelong learning and social capital;

• URGED that the revised report be prepared for publication and presentation as a key input to the 
meeting of Education Ministers in April 2001 as well as a contribution to the discussions of Ministers 
meeting in the Council of the OECD in May 2001 on economic growth and sustainable development; 
and

• AGREED to send written comments on the report to the Secretariat by 11 December 2000.

ITEM 7: COUNTRY DEVELOPMENTS

**Denmark: “Adult Learning as a contribution to Lifelong Learning”**

23. Mr. Kim Jacobsen, Director for Adult Education, Ministry of Education described the major 
reform of the vocational and continuing training system being introduced in Denmark and outlined the 
objectives of the reform:

24. To provide relevant adult education and continuing training offers to all adults at all levels, from 
the low-skilled to university graduates: The offers of education/training are to constitute a system of 
competencies which will give all adults formal recognition of the knowledge and qualifications they 
acquire, whether this takes place at the workplace or by participation in formal education/training 
programmes.

25. Improving opportunities for those with the lowest levels of education: Courses for adults in 
general subjects, such as reading, spelling, mathematics and continuing vocational training play an 
important role in the efforts to enhance education/training opportunities for the low-skilled groups. The 
same applies to the new possibilities for having work experience and participation in continuing training 
credited as part of an education programme which will give the participants formally recognised vocational 
competencies.

26. Better utilisation of resources: In 1998, the Danish State spent 12.7 billion DKK on continuing 
and advanced training. The adult education reform will make it possible to use the huge resources for adult 
education in a more cost-effective way.

**Austria: “Quality Assurance in the context of Decentralisation”**

27. Mr. Edwin Radnitzky, Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, reported on the 
“Quality in Schools”(QIS) project put in place to support and encourage schools to review, monitor and 
develop their own quality. Teachers, pupils and parents who work together on quality issues will in future 
be an indispensable part of school culture. Autonomous quality assurance and quality development of 
schools is the precondition and starting point of a future-oriented school system of high quality. To 
facilitate quality assurance and development work, a proposal for structuring the complex area of schools 
was made under the QIS project, covering the following quality areas: teaching and learning, class and 
school climate, internal and external relations, school management, and professionalism and staff 
development.
28. The core element of the QIS initiative and every school’s quality activity is the school development plan. It contains the school’s guiding principles, an account of the status quo and specific objectives and measures in different quality areas. The plan serves as a guideline for educational action, as information to the public, as a planning tool and a yardstick to be applied to the development of the school.

29. Evaluation is an integral feature of the school development plan. It is needed to keep track of developments and to ascertain the implementation and the impact of measures. It has to be performed at appropriate intervals, individually and jointly, by means of feasible methods.

30. For the dynamic exchange of experience and information on quality development an interactive platform is being set up on the internet, offering opportunities for discussing and presenting projects and supplying up-to-date information on interesting new developments and events [http://www.qis.at]. Although most of the articles are in German, the network is open for articles in other languages (English, French, Italian) and information about the structure and handling of the application will be translated.

31. Both presentations provoked a lively discussion in the Committee and it was regretted that, due to a very heavy agenda, more time could not be devoted to this interesting item.

32. On the proposal of the President, the Committee NOTED the presentations by Denmark and Austria and comments made.

ITEM 8: MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL


33. In introducing the item the Director reminded the Committee that it would have an opportunity of discussing the revised documentation at a meeting of the Enlarged Bureau of the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board on 22 and 23 (am) January 2001.

34. The discussion was extensive and thorough, a full day being devoted to the three substantive documents. Concern was expressed about the late delivery of documents, especially in French. The French-speaking countries urged the Secretariat to distribute all documents well in advance of the Enlarged Bureau meeting to allow sufficient time for consultation in capitals prior to the meeting.

A. Arrangements for the meeting of Education Ministers [DEELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000)17]

35. The Deputy-Director introduced the document and drew delegates’ attention to two elements in the programme that had not been discussed previously, namely i) the joint consultation with BIAC and TUAC on the afternoon of Monday 2 April, which he reported both BIAC and TUAC had agreed could be a joint consultation; and ii) the proposed Forum on “Information and Communication Technology and Education, proposed to be convened between the consultation with BIAC and TUAC and the dinner. The Committee was asked to review the proposed agenda and recommend any changes that might be made to it; and recommend to Council the names of Ministers to be appointed as Vice-Chairs for the meeting. To date two countries had expressed interest in the Vice-Chair: Denmark (Ms. Margarethe Vestager) and Korea (Dr. Lee Don-Hee).

36. The following were the main comments by delegates.

i) The inclusion of “for all” in the title of the Ministerial was supported by the Committee.
ii) The idea of a Forum was warmly welcomed, though the UK delegate suggested the topic was too important to schedule at a time when not all Ministers might be present. In regard to substance, it was suggested that the cost of successful implementation of ICT should be covered and proposed that input be obtained from the student network involved in the CERI project on students’ experience in using ICT, for which the network would meet in Aix-en-Provence on 8-9 December.

iii) There was considerable support for involving children or young people in some form of entertainment in the informal dinner on 2 April. The Secretariat agreed to explore possibilities with the French Authorities.

iv) Several delegates emphasised once again that there should be opportunities during the meeting for informal consultations among ministers. Some delegates expressed the interest of their Minister in taking on the role of discussant in the different topics:

- Lunch, 3 April: Trade in Education Services (Australia, Norway).
- Lunch 4 April: Dealing with anti-social behaviour in schools (Portugal, Sweden) for which the Committee requested use of a positively stated title, raising the same issues, and inclusion of citizenship (Japanese and Swiss delegates) and values (Swiss delegate) in the issues for discussion.

37. On a more general note the Swiss delegate asked where and how in the agenda ministers would have an opportunity not only to take stock, but also to indicate future work. He said this should not be dealt with only in the Communiqué. The Deputy Director pointed out that Education Policy Analysis 2001 would provide a substantial stocktake on current work as the key background document for the Ministers’ discussion, while not being made the specific focus of discussion within the time limit of the meeting. He said that the Communiqué could legitimately extend beyond the specific discussions in the meeting to include evaluative comment on current work and an agenda for future work, since its wording would be authorised by the Ministers as communicating what they wanted to say. The European Commission delegate asked about media and press coverage for the meeting. The Director added that, by the time of the Ministerial, the human and social capital report will have been published, as well as Education Policy Analysis and some short highlights on indicators, all of which could generate media interest.

38. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- AGREED to recommend to Council the nomination of Ms. Margarethe Vestager (Denmark) and Dr. Lee Don-Hee (Korea) as Vice-Chairs;
- WELCOMED the inclusion of “for all” in the title of the Ministerial; and
- NOTED the concern of one member that there was a risk that many Ministers would miss the potentially valuable discussion in the proposed Forum on information and communication technology and education, because of its timing on the Monday afternoon in advance of the meeting and NOTED the suggested alternative of moving that topic to one of the luncheon discussions;
- NOTED country interest in their ministers taking the lead in the different themes and luncheon topics; and
- REQUESTED the Secretariat to find a more positive title for the Lunch discussion on Wednesday 4 April.

39. Mr. Abrar Hasan introduced the document, noting that it takes into account the discussion at the Spring meeting on the themes for the ministerial, and requesting guidance on whether the issues raised are the most important ones and whether the text is sufficiently linked to them.

40. The French and Swiss delegates drew attention to a lack of consistency of language between the English and French text and attributed the problem to the poor quality of the French translation. Given the late arrival of the French version, the French delegate will provide written comments on the text. It was hoped that documentation for the Ministerial would be circulated in both languages well before the meeting.

41. The paper was well received with some editorial changes suggested by several countries, especially to sharpen the Issues for Discussion under each theme. Some of the more general concerns expressed are listed below.

42. Introduction: The Knowledge Society and Lifelong Learning. Questions were raised about consistency, with ‘knowledge society’ used in the title of the opening section and ‘knowledge economy’ in the remainder of the document, with several speakers expressing preference for ‘knowledge society’. The Irish delegate did not think it was necessary to take out ‘knowledge economy’ and suggested instead brief elucidation of what precisely is meant in each case. Mr. Hasan commented that the use of ‘knowledge society’ in the opening section had been intended to indicate a broader focus than that on ‘knowledge economy’ intended in Theme 1. The Swedish delegate said the first sentence of this section refers to ageing populations as a key for education policy, but this was not reflected in the remainder of the document.

43. Theme 1: Fostering Competences for the Knowledge Economy: Emphasis was given to the importance of informal learning, with specific references made to: the family and the community as a site for learning, the workplace as a site for learning, and the use schools can make of informal learning settings. On the other hand, the case was made for a greater focus on the formal system of education (schools, colleges and universities). Other areas nominated as requiring more attention included: citizenship and the cultural value of education; the fostering of the individual’s competencies; the relationship between literacy and equity, access and participation; and, with respect to self-directed learning, not only learning to learn but also learning to be autonomous and more emphasis on development than on measurement.

44. Theme 2: Securing the Benefits from Lifelong Learning for all: This section should include the problem of social exclusion, people at risk such as migrants and people with special needs. Reference in paragraph 15 to the mobilisation of resources should clarify that this is not necessarily financial resources. It was also suggested that it should be made clear, in this section, that lifelong learning begins at a very early age and is not simply about training adults.

45. Theme 3: Developing Innovative Teaching and Learning: A great deal of attention was given to this theme. The UK delegate referred to the recent Rotterdam conference on Schooling for Tomorrow and suggested incorporating a flavour of the keynote address by Michael Barber setting out four deliverable goals for school systems with five strategic challenges. Some delegates would like this section to highlight that the school is not the only learning place and suggested the text be extended to non formal settings, such as the workplace. Several speakers referred to an inconsistency of language between paragraphs 18 and 19 and asked that the whole issue of what is a teacher be thought through before moving on to reforming the teaching profession. One delegate thought it would be more appropriate to look at improving teaching in order to improve learning. In relation to ICT, it was suggested that there be reference to culture and language when talking about software, and to its use as a way of promoting
regional equity. Some delegates said attention should be given to the role of higher education in training teachers, as well as the role of research in education.

46. The Secretariat thanked delegates for an interesting and helpful discussion and assured speakers that suggestions offered for improving the text would be taken into account in the revised version. The Director emphasised that the document was designed to stimulate discussion and debate among ministers and for this reason it was important i) that the note remains short and ii) that it should not be too bland, and need not always be balanced.

47. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

• WELCOMED the Issues Paper and NOTED that views expressed at the Spring meeting had been taken on board;

• REQUESTED the Secretariat to make the document more focussed, especially with regard to the questions to ministers;

• NOTED requests to include: i) the informal as well as the formal settings for learning; ii) resources other than financial resources; the need to focus on higher education in terms of preparing teachers and the role of education R&D (theme 2); iii) emphasis on the role of the community and families in the process of formal learning (theme 3); and more reflection on the problems of ageing populations in the document generally;

• NOTED the preference for use of the term “knowledge society” as opposed to “knowledge economy” in theme 1; and

• AGREED to provide the Secretariat with written comments by 8 December 2000.


48. Delegates were invited to focus their comments on chapters 1, 2 and 3. Chapters 4 and 5 are circulated in the form of elaborated outlines and the first draft of the completed chapters will be circulated to the Education Committee for comment before at the Enlarged Bureau meeting.

49. Given the late arrival of documents many countries indicated they would be sending their written comments on the Chapters following consultation in capitals.

50. Chapter 1: Lifelong learning for all: Policy lessons, introduced by Mr. Abrar Hasan: The general reaction to this chapter was positive with few proposals for change. The Irish delegate had a few issues to raise bilaterally with the Secretariat regarding Irish examples in section 4 and the inclusion of additional Irish examples in policy lessons 1, 2 and 3.

51. Chapter 2: Lifelong learning for all: Taking stock, introduced by Mr. Greg Wurzburg: All speakers appreciated the very important work being done here. One of the main concerns was with the composite indicator of success in implementing lifelong learning. A few countries questioned whether the timing of such a composite indicator was politically opportune. Others focussed on the limitations of the separate indicators from which it was composed, noting that the text highlights the problem of their lack the comparability. One suggestion was to present the material in a more descriptive way with fewer figures, another to have a “step between” in the figures. The Netherlands delegate, on the other hand, recognised the value of such a measure as that provided by the composite but proposed an alternative in which percentage of GDP spent on education was introduced as well to make it an index of efficiency of provision and not just extent of provision. Some questioned whether the data in Education at a Glance
(EAG), on which some of the indicators were based, correctly represented their country’s position. The New Zealand delegate remarked that the Committee needed to be clear about the degree to which this document is to inform the ministerial meeting and the degree to which it is the EPA publication and the balance to be struck between these roles.

52. The Director replied that a paper of this kind has to inform ministers and the wider public on the present situation with regard to lifelong learning. He suggested countries review the statistics and indicators in EAG to see if they do fairly represent their countries. Regarding whether the time is right to publish a composite indicator, he said it could, by opening a debate about what is being measured, be a significant tool for achieving a better definition of what is meant by lifelong learning and whether progress is being made on achieving that goal. Mr. Wurzburg added that lifelong learning is a very open-ended mandate but that, if it is so open-ended that anything can be classified as lifelong learning, then it was not a very useful tool for policy. He recommended, as a compromise, framing this section with caveats about comparability of objectives, and to be more explicit about the particular assumptions underlying the indicators used in calculating the composite. The Chair agreed it is important to define what is exactly meant by lifelong learning.

53. Chapter 3: Closing the Gap: Securing the benefits from education and training for all, introduced by Mr. Kurt Larsen: This was considered a key chapter and the UK delegate welcomed its inclusion in EPA. Box 1 contains some very provocative examples from countries of how students from lower socio-economic backgrounds access education; it includes no recognition of steps that have been taken to tackle this. Referring to the section on ethnic minority groups, the Secretariat was asked to reconsider the terminology used and to include reference to gypsies, given the strong evidence that in a large number of OECD countries they are at the extreme of educational under-achievement and social exclusion.

54. Chapter 4: Competences for the Knowledge Economy, introduced by Ms. Beatriz Pont: Doubts were again raised about the use of ‘knowledge economy’ rather than ‘knowledge society’. It was suggested that the whole chapter, although interesting, does not focus sufficiently on “for all” and so lacks reference to provisions for the population at risk. The mismatches between demand and supply, which raises political and ethical question of migration flows to wealthier OECD countries, should also be raised, even if not in great detail, by reference to cross-border recruitment. The EC delegate suggested an interesting reference could be a speech made by a member of the European Round Table of Industrialists, calling for a well balanced but relevant basic education for people to be ready to enter the labour market.

55. Regarding the suggestion that Chapter 4 does not focus sufficiently on “for all”, the Secretariat replied that Chapter 3 is devoted exclusively to the “for all” aspect.

56. Chapter 5: Tomorrow’s Schools: Trends, Innovations, Policies, introduced by Mr. David Istance. The Swiss delegate offered an alternative title: “Tomorrow’s sites of learning: Trends, innovations and policies in schooling” to broaden the scope to ‘knowledge facilitators’, not just teachers more narrowly defined, and to include learning in multiple settings, not just in classrooms and schools, especially with the critical role of ICT. The UK delegate suggested that the goals and challenges of the national strategy, outlined in Professor Barber’s keynote address at the Rotterdam Schooling for Tomorrow conference could provide the basis for the concluding section to this chapter.

57. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- NOTED the presentation by the Secretariat of the different chapters and comments made;
- AGREED to provide the Secretariat with written comments by 8 December 2000.

D. Draft Communiqué [DEELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000)14]
58. In presenting the draft Communiqué, Mr. Barry McGaw highlighted its primary roles in communication between the Education Ministers and the OECD Council and in setting the directions for future work on education by the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board, and its substance which is designed to maintain continuity with the current work on lifelong learning while establishing new emphases. He noted also the use, for the first time, of the first person plural to make the authorial voice of Ministers clear. This innovation was welcomed by several speakers.

59. The following countries indicated that they will provide the Secretariat with written comments on the text: Austria, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.

60. The first draft of the Communiqué was generally well received by the Committee. Some countries found the document too long and too dense and said the language needed to be simple, clear and precise. There was also a request to instil two or three clear messages, either at the beginning or at the end of the text, especially those that give direction for work under a new mandate. The inclusion of key points in the margins was also suggested. Several speakers highlighted the need for building into the introduction to the Communiqué a definition of what ministers mean by lifelong learning. Several speakers pointed to the necessity of ensuring that the Communiqué is consistent with the Issues for Discussion and Education Policy Analysis, especially chapters 1, 2 and 3.

61. There was a lively discussion in the Committee on the various sections of the report and the Secretariat will take into account as many as possible of the proposed editing changes in revising the text. Some of the more general suggestions raised are listed below.

62. A review of progress on the lifelong learning agenda: The document should refer to basic competencies rather than the general competencies of students; include teaching methods for second chance students; clarify what is meant by “the shift in focus from teaching to learning”; emphasise more the role of education and training to prepare for citizenship; clarify, with the addition of a sentence, the international comparability of data; and refer to the Education Committee’s thematic reviews; The UK delegate said that having the Ministers refer to an extension of PISA and to new work on adult skills would pre-empt decisions that need to be made by the Committee and the CERI Governing Board.

63. An agenda for future work: Reference should be made to the wider portfolios of education Ministers but, in referring to broader concerns, it should not be said that ministers want them taken up only ‘as Education Ministers’ (paragraph 11).

64. Strategies for reforming teaching and learning: A great deal of attention was devoted to this section, especially with regard to paragraphs 16 and 17. While the Belgian delegate found these paragraphs provocative and likely to result in an interesting debate during the ministerial, others suggested that it would be unwise to have the ministers nominate specific reform options to be examined in future work, particularly ones that might involve radical changes to the teaching profession. It would be sufficient to have ministers request research on teachers and teaching to enable a wider variety of policy options to be explored subsequently. Other comments alluded to: the desirability for a stronger statement on the importance of education; dissatisfaction with the phrase “bringing back teachers for a limited time”; a need to define the core competences of teachers, not just ICT; the inclusion of issues of citizenship, democracy, gender equality, motivation.

65. Building community and increasing international understanding: The EC delegate asked that some reference be made to the fact that the EU has been involved for many years in the process of promoting lifelong learning.
66. Improved monitoring of the effectiveness and efficiency of education and training systems: Paragraph 22 should list other international organisations, such as the EU, Eurostat, IEA, APEC, NAFTA and the Council of Europe.

67. Our expectations for the future: Some speakers asked the Secretariat to look further at this concluding paragraph saying that, as it stands, it is rather bland and does not state clearly what the OECD’s role would be in investing in competence or how a new mandate would link to the present one. It would also be desirable to give a clearer indication of what the main thrust of a new mandate would be. It was suggested that the conclusions of the Rotterdam conference be included in this section.

68. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- WELCOMED the draft, noting that it generally covered the relevant issues well;
- REQUESTED the use of simpler language, consideration of including a distillation of the main messages at the beginning or the end of the document, especially those that give direction for work under a new mandate, and also the inclusion of key points in the margins;
- REQUESTED the Secretariat to ensure that the messages contained in the Communiqué were consistent with the Issues for Discussion and the chapters of Education Policy Analysis;
- NOTED the request by the French-speaking delegations to ensure that the French version more accurately reflected the English original;
- SUGGESTED the inclusion of a definition of lifelong learning in the text;
- NOTED reservations expressed with regard to the section on "Strategies for reforming teaching and learning”, especially paragraphs 16 and 17 and the request to delete the last sentence of paragraph 17; and
- AGREED to provide the Secretariat with written comments by 8 December 2000.


69. Ms. Michelle Neuman presented an overview of the Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in 12 countries. The last country visit had been completed in June 2000 and several Background Reports and Country Notes are posted on the activity website http://www.oecd.org/els/ecec. She then introduced a draft of the Comparative Report, noting that a preliminary version was discussed at a September meeting of national representatives and invited experts. Ms. Neuman provided a brief introduction to the cross-national developments and issues discussed in the report, as well as an overview of eight key elements of successful ECEC policy. She informed delegates of upcoming dissemination activities, including an international conference on ECEC policy that will take place on 14-15 June 2001 in Stockholm, Sweden. Finally, she proposed possible follow-up activities to the review: (a) a second round of streamlined reviews in further countries; (b) a series of meetings on a theme related to the report; and (c) additional work on data and indicator development.

70. The Committee welcomed the draft and congratulated Mr. John Bennett and Ms. Michelle Neuman on the quality of the work. It was widely agreed that the revisions undertaken since the September meeting had greatly improved the draft. Several delegates noted that the report would be useful in national policy discussions. Others reported that the process of participation in the thematic review had been very
beneficial in bringing together different stakeholders to discuss ECEC policy. The priority that the Committee has accorded to ECEC policy has helped support and encourage national policy efforts in the field.

71. The Swedish delegate invited the Committee to send delegates to the international conference in Stockholm, Sweden on 14-15 June 2001. More information will be sent to the members of the Committee shortly. The UK delegate invited the Committee members to a high-level conference on children, families, and communities that will take place in London on 26-28 February 2001. The conference will have a UK focus and will complement and reinforce the work undertaken by the OECD thematic review. The delegate from Chile invited OECD participation at a meeting focussed on teacher training and curriculum next July.

72. Delegates encouraged their colleagues to develop national dissemination strategies to ensure that lessons from the review are shared with a wide audience within OECD countries. Belgium (French Community), the Czech Republic, Portugal, and the Netherlands have planned national conferences and seminars focussed on the outputs of the review. The New Zealand delegate urged colleagues to keep early childhood issues on the agenda of the Committee’s future programmes of work noting that, when they are not the focus of particular work, they often drop from view.

73. Delegates from Australia, Belgium (Flemish Community), Chile, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom expressed their interest in taking part in follow-up activities to the review and were anxious to review more detailed proposals from the Secretariat at the next Committee meeting.

74. Mr. Bennett and Ms. Neuman thanked the delegates for their support and urged them to send written comments to the Secretariat by 8 December 2000. Mr. Hasan noted that several countries were interested in exploring additional activities related to data and indicator development and informed the delegates that the Secretariat has undertaken preliminary conceptual work in this area.

75. On the proposal of the president, the Committee:

- SUPPORTED the overall content and structure of the draft Comparative Report and COMMENDED the team on the quality of the report;
- AGREED to send written comments to the Secretariat by 8 December 2000;
- RECOMMENDED the publication of the report after it is revised in light of the Committee's comments;
- AGREED to send delegates to the international conference on ECEC policy in Stockholm, Sweden on 14-15 June 2001;
- NOTED the interest of Australia, Belgium (Flemish Community), Chile, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom in participating in dissemination and follow-up activities to the review; and
- REQUESTED that the Secretariat develop more detailed proposals of follow-up activities for the Committee's consideration.

76. Time limitations restricted the Committee’s opportunity to discuss the proposed activity in detail. However delegates received the proposal presented by Mr. Richard Sweet with great enthusiasm and with a strong degree of interest being expressed in participating in the activity. Firm interest was expressed by Austria, Australia, Germany, Ireland, Korea, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland. In addition Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom indicated their interest in the activity but either requested additional information on costs or indicated that their interest would need formal confirmation. In view of the number of countries expressing an interest delegates were informed that initial estimates of the costs of participation would need to be revised, and that they would be contacted with more specific details.

77. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

• WELCOMED the presentation and NOTED expressions of interest on the part of 17 countries in participating in the activity;

• NOTED the request by some countries for additional information with regard to costs; and

• ENDORSED the importance of the activity including both young people and adults and of it working in co-operation with non-government organisations, and asked that its timetable accommodate differing national circumstances.


78. Due to time constraints this item was not discussed in the Committee. Delegates were invited to send written comments on the proposal for the new activity, presented in document DEELSA/ED(2000)3 to the Secretariat [Ms. Marianne Durand-Drouhin, Tel: 33 1 45249283, Fax: 33 1 45249098, Email: marianne.durand-drouhin@oecd.org], by close of business on 20 December. The Committee hoped that a discussion of this new activity could be scheduled for the Spring meeting.

ITEM 12: FINDING RESOURCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING:


79. Due to time constraints this item was not discussed. The Canadian delegate did however inform delegates that 20 countries had registered to participate in the meeting organised by HRDC and the OECD. The website for the conference is www.oecd-canada.gc.ca.

80. Due to time constraints this item was not discussed in the Committee. Delegates were invited to send written comments on the document to the Secretariat [Mr. Patrick Werquin, Tel: 33 1 45249758, Email: patrick.werquin@oecd.org for Ms. Anne Sonnet, Tel: 33 1 45249169, Email: anne.sonnet@oecd.org, Fax: 33 1 45249098].

ITEM 14: OTHER BUSINESS

A. Evaluation of the Education Committee:

81. The Committee NOTED the synthesis of replies to the questionnaire completed at the Spring meeting and AGREED to complete and return the Evaluation Form for the present Session to the Committee Secretary within one week of the meeting.

B. Dates of future meetings:

22-23 (am) January 2001, Meeting of the Extended Bureau of the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board in preparation for the Education Ministerial; Spring 2001: 29(p.m.) May, joint session with the CERI Governing Board to discuss Indicators and 30th May (CERI Governing Board: 28-29(a.m.) May); Autumn 2001: 14-16 November (CERI Governing Board 19-20 November)

82. In the discussion on Education Indicators (Item 5A) the Committee endorsed the Secretariat proposal to have a joint half-day session with the CERI Governing Board to discuss work on indicators. This being so the Spring meeting will take place on the afternoon of 29th and 30th May. Given the fact that there was little time for discussion on item 10, and that items 11, 12 and 13 were removed from the Agenda, the Secretariat will look into the necessity of extending the Spring meeting by one day should the Agenda for that meeting warrant it.

C. Automatic Declassification of documents

83. The Committee NOTED the request to submit objections to the downgrading of documents circulated between 1st January and 31st December 1998 to the Committee Secretary, Mrs. Pat Chardome [Fax: 00 33 1 45249098, Email: pat.chardome@oecd.org], in writing, by 1st December 2000 at the latest.
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