SDC GUIDELINES

FOR BASIC EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Why new guidelines?

Education and VSD are defined as key priorities in the "Message on the Continuation of Technical Cooperation and Financial Aid for Developing Countries", which was adopted by the Swiss Parliament for 2009 to 2012 and will guide SDC's work for the 2009-2011 period. These Guidelines for Basic Education (BE) and Vocational Skills Development (VSD) were prepared at the request of SDC's Board of Directors. They replace the "Basic Education Sector Policy" (1996) and the "Sector Policy on Vocational Education" (1994). They are designed to guide SDC staff in their work at bilateral and multilateral levels, and will also serve as a guide for SDC's close partners within and outside Switzerland. The new guidelines are the result of important national and international developments in these sub-sectors and are based on the lessons learned by SDC over the last 10 years.

Scope of the guidelines

Basic education (BE): The role of BE, according to the international definition, is to meet the "basic learning needs" of any person – child, youth or adult. BE thus encompasses more than just primary schooling.

"…These needs comprise essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as 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. The scope of basic learning needs and how they

should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time". [1]

BE is considered to be the necessary foundation for life-long learning. Without the basic learning skills comprised in BE, any future learning or skill-acquisition (in particular regarding professional skills) is seriously compromised. Although the scope of BE varies with individual countries, it usually covers the levels of formal pre-primary, primary and, increasingly, the first level of secondary education. It also includes various forms of "non-formal" education, such as adult literacy, "second-chance" education for children and youth who have never attended school or who dropped out early, education for working children, etc. These education programmes frequently include aspects of VSD.

The famous Report to UNESCO drawn up by the International Commission on Education in the 21st Century cites four key foundations of education: acquiring knowledge ("learning to know"), learning how to do things ("learning to do"), learning how to live together and get along, and finally "learning to be". [2]

Vocational skills development (VSD): The broad concept of VSD encompasses all organised learning processes for the development of technical, social and personal competencies and qualifications that contribute to the sustainable long-term integration of trained people in decent working conditions into the formal or informal economy, either on an employed or self-employed basis. VSD usually combines theory and practice and can take place in schools or technical institutes, workshops or at the workplace in enterprises.

The training of individuals with no solid BE and/or from disadvantaged social groups must include strengthening key learning skills (e.g. literacy) and different empowerment methods, particularly for girls.

According to the concept of lifelong learning, VSD can take place at all education levels and be acquired throughout economically active life. This broader vision of VSD has thus shifted away from classical Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which aims at acquiring qualifications for employment in the formal economy.

BE and VSD are interrelated and belong to the same education system, although each area has its own logic and goals. Treating them in a more integrated way will help strengthen their contribution to sustainable human and economic development in general and employability in particular. Developing educational programmes that integrate BE and VSD is particularly important for the many people in developing countries who have not been able to obtain their schooling and training through a so-called "traditional" education system. Synergies between BE and VSD already exist in the field: for example, programmes in western Africa that include elements of BE such as basic literacy in traditional craft apprenticeships; programmes for young school dropouts that combine accelerated BE with vocational and pre-vocational skills development; enhanced BE in technical schools; and implementation of technical training options in literacy programmes. Such initiatives should be promoted, as they will make for qualitative change in educational policy and educational systems.

In addition to the two focus areas BE and VSD that are covered by these guidelines and that have the objective of sustainable change in the educational system of partner countries, SDC supports complementary areas of higher education. Here, specific instruments are used, such as support for research (e.g. partnerships between Swiss and foreign institutions). Moreover, SDC promotes capacity development in all its activities. ●

"I feel as if I escaped" [from early marriage and rural poverty]
(Female student, ABE Centre, Ethiopia)

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1   World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting basic learning needs, Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990.

2   Delors, Jacques et al. (1996), "Learning: the Treasure Within"; *Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the XXIst Century*, UNESCO (www.unesco.org/delors/delors_e.pdf)

"Atlouba el ilma mina elmehdi ila lahdi"
"Seek knowledge from cradle to grave" (Arabic proverb)

2. CONTEXT

The contextual elements taken account of in this strategy development are the following:

- **The fundamental importance of education for development**

Access to the various bodies of knowledge via solid non-formal, informal or formal education is a constitutive condition for being able to think freely, to consider and plan for the future, to make choices and to act. Education is thus a pre-requisite of empowerment. The educational system exerts a powerful influence on social and gender-based inequality, an influence which may tend to reproduce or on the contrary to correct such inequalities. Education can help break the intergenerational "poverty cycle", can facilitate upward social mobility, can foster community spirit through shared values and can contribute to tolerance for cultural diversity and inclusiveness regarding disadvantaged groups.

Education is also a constitutive condition for other human rights (such as those relating to citizenship, information, health, etc.) and benefits not just individuals but society as a whole through its positive effects on all areas of development and the fight against poverty (e.g. governance, decentralisation, economic development, health, peacekeeping and conflict management/prevention, etc.). Numerous studies have brought out the spectacularly positive effects of educating women, which correlates with improvements in the health and education of children, lower rates of early marriage for girls, lower birth rates and infant mortality rates, etc.

"Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realising other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. Education has a vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, and controlling population growth. Increasingly, education is recognised as one of the best financial investments States can make…"

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1999), General Comment No. 13, The Right to Education (Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

● **International commitments** *(see annex III for details)*

Education is a universally recognised fundamental human right. The right to primary education for all is a priority, but the right to education also comprises the other levels of education, including technical and vocational education and training (the obligation of the State is minimal). Important milestones and international commitments in the education sector are: the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien; the 2000 EFA World Forum in Dakar, which defined six objectives to reach by 2015. Two of those six objectives were among those set at the 2000 Millennium Summit (which set a total of eight goals). An international fast-track initiative,[3] supported by the G-8 among others, was launched to speed progress towards those MDGs. VSD does not appear as such in the MDGs, but it does contribute to MDG 1 (poverty reduction) and the goal of reducing youth unemployment, which is a part of MDG 8. As to VSD, the 2002 ILO and UNESCO joint recommendations represent a crucial development in recognising the complementarity between BE and VSD, along with the importance of VSD at all educational levels.[4]

● **Developing and transition countries** *(see annex II for details)*

Many developing and transition countries have made significant progress in increasing access to primary education and gender equality by developing consistent long-term education policies. However, enormous challenges remain: these concern issues such as equal access, quality and relevance; governance (participatory policy design, deconcentration and decentralisation); implementation (especially in outlying regions) as well as sustainable local financing. Non-for-mal education, including literacy programmes, has made little progress, and only a very small proportion of the education budgets of the various developing countries is channelled into this area (often less than 1%). The main VSD-related challenges concern broadening access (particularly in the southern hemisphere), improving VSD's image, which is still often that of a "second class" education, and keeping VSD in step with changes in the job market and the underlying evolution of technology and the economy in general (including in transition countries).

It is in so-called "fragile states", including those currently affected by armed conflict, that the situation is most difficult. A high percentage of SDC's priority countries are among the world's least educationally developed, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

● **International cooperation**

International support for BE has driven a significant rise in aid for this sector, particularly since 2000. The focus of this support has been on primary education, to the detriment of a broader basic education and VSD agenda (including non-formal education). TVET has received only very limited support, i.e. 8–9% of total education aid.

The shift towards sector programmes and the improvement in donor harmonisation offers unprecedented opportunities in terms of coordination and the overall efficacy of development aid. However, many countries are still highly aid-dependent and have difficulty developing bottom-up solutions that are suited to their own specificity. In addition, accountability towards donors tends to be stronger than towards citizens

3   Education for All (EFA) Fast-track Initiative. (http://www.education-fast-track.org)
4   Technical and vocational education and training for the 21st century: UNESCO and ILO Recommendations, 2002.

"My children have lost their shame at speaking Kaqchikel"

(Parent, bilingual school, Guatemala)

stakeholders; promotion of spaces for dialogue and exchanges of views; targeted participation in political dialogue on the basis of field experiences; and a strong concern for equity and quality issues.

Some of the main weaknesses have been: shortcomings in scaling-up innovations due to insufficient strategic alliances and unfavourable political contexts, and inadequate human resources to play a stronger role in national policy dialogue with governmental agencies, in particular those of the central government, as well as in donor harmonisation. These weaknesses have been especially apparent in countries where SDC's education support is one part of larger programmes in rural development and governance rather than constituting a priority sector itself.

In the field of BE: Support is currently provided through approximately 25 projects or programmes in 11 countries in West Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Yearly spending amounts to around CHF 30 million in bilateral cooperation (including CHF 8 million in humanitarian assistance) and CHF 23 million in multilateral aid. [5]

SDC has been strong in the promotion of literacy and BE in general for the young and for adults who did not have access to primary education, as well as in alternative education for out-of-school children. It has focused consistently on equity issues (such as inclusion for marginalised groups, girls, etc.) and quality and relevance issues by such innovations as using national languages as teaching languages, using curricula defined in collaboration with the communities concerned and based upon relevant socio-cultural contexts, good teacher training, empowering pedagogical approaches, curricula combining BE and (pre-)vocational training, etc. SDC has also supported consideration of the ultimate goals of education (i.e. "What sort of education, for what sort of development and society?").

After initially focusing on non-formal education, which is essential for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and offers more room for innovation, SDC has shifted progressively towards more holistic approaches to basic education (e.g. fully integrating non-formal education programmes into education policies, building bridges between formal and non-formal sub-systems, financing non-formal education, improving quality and equity in formal education, etc.). In international policy dialogue, SDC

5   These figures do not include SDC's financing to Swiss NGOs active in BE.

and elected officials. These new approaches represent an opportunity for SDC to help shape education policies. However, they also entail certain risks: donors may focus on aid mechanisms rather than on sectoral technical aspects, on-the-ground realities and capacity building. They may also focus their support exclusively on governments to the detriment of civil society organisations, even though the latter are often innovative (especially concerning educational initiatives for disadvantaged groups).

● **SDC's track record and challenges**
Over the years, SDC has provided on-going support to BE and VSD in various partner countries as well as to international institutions and networks. However, unlike other bilateral and multilateral institutions that have taken decisive action to reach the Dakar objectives, the volume of financial resources allocated to these sectors at SDC has stagnated. With regard to modalities of work in its bilateral support for BE and VSD, the main factors for success have been the following: closeness to field realities; on-going, flexible support and quality partnerships; support for innovations (developed bottom-up based on local on-the-ground specificities); multi-stakeholder and participatory approaches on all levels, including decentralised levels and both governmental and non-governmental

has concentrated on promoting this holistic view of basic education (with Sub-Saharan Africa as a geographical focus), and has made targeted efforts to promote recognition of non-formal education, with all the changes in educational systems that this entails.

In the field of VSD: SDC has a long track record in all the regions where it works, today supporting around 23 projects in 18 countries (yearly bilateral support of around CHF 19 million), and has established a recognised profile among donor agencies.[6]

Approaches have evolved with time: the 1994 Sector Policy on Vocational Education marked a shift away from the support of "Centres of Excellence" – well-equipped institutions providing high quality education and training – that proved to be very costly and to have limited outreach. With the objective of fighting poverty more effectively and adapting to globalisation-related economic change, SDC shifted its focus towards developing VSD offers aimed at larger target groups, including women, those living in rural areas, and people working in the informal economy.

Successful approaches – that will continue under the present guidelines – relate to the combination of school- and workplace-based training, links between the training offer and potential local economic development, and the development of coordination mechanisms among public and private actors at local and national level. SDC also played a key role in founding the Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development in 1996 as a coordination and exchange platform among international stakeholders supporting VSD.

These new guidelines clarify SDC's priorities and confirm SDC's adherence to the concept and the terminology of Vocational Skills Development, which is broader than traditional TVET. Although there has been some improvement recently, VSD remains an area of relatively limited international cooperation, since most development agencies focus on universal primary education in spite of the crucial role VSD plays in fighting poverty and facilitating economic development. SDC will therefore continue its efforts to promote VSD's importance on the international development agenda and to strengthen the presence of VSD in national development strategies and sector-wide programmes. ●

"Такрор модари дониш аст"

"Practice is the mother of knowledge" (Tajik proverb)

6   These figures do not include SDC's financing for Swiss NGOs active in VSD.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

● The goal of SDC cooperation in education is to enable the people living in its partner countries, in particular the culturally, socially, politically and economically most disadvantaged population groups, to exert their right to education (including vocational skills development and training) as a way of improving their well-being and means of existence. In accordance with the international human rights framework and with each specific context, SDC intends to contribute to the improvement of education in terms of accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and adequate resource allocation (see annex IV).

● The overarching objective pursued by SDC is to contribute to the transformation and sustainable improvement of the education systems in its partner countries, in order to make them more responsive to the rights and aspirations of the populations concerned, in particular the poorest, and more able to contribute, together with other institutions, to economic development and (self-) employment.

SDC must help make educational systems and policies more:

1. **inclusive and conducive to social and gender equity** (accessible to all, adapted to the socio-cultural diversity of all learners, empowering disadvantaged groups and designed to project the ideals of human rights and social equality);

2. **respectful of social diversity so as to facilitate peaceful coexistence;**

3. **responsive to the current challenges faced by communities** (e.g. HIV/AIDS, sustainable development, etc.);

4. **relevant to job market demands and promoting income generation;**

5. **supportive of life-long learning** and flexible learning pathways, via recognition of previous learning, competency-based education and training, equivalencies (e.g. between formal and non-formal education), etc.;

6. **participatory and partnership-based** (including partnerships with local populations, especially parents, civil society organisations, employers, etc.); and

7. **adequately financed** (in terms of volume, mechanisms, proportion of national resources committed, etc.).

Priorities and beneficiaries

In BE, SDC concentrates its support on primary and lower secondary education and their equivalent in non-formal education (literacy programmes, alternative community schools, "second chance education", programmes combining BE and VSD, etc.). Innovative pre-primary programmes are supported, as is secondary and tertiary education in support of BE, in particular teacher training.

With respect to VSD in formal education systems, SDC supports mainly secondary education (lower and upper secondary). In non-formal settings, particularly youth and adult education, SDC works to make VSD offers accessible for people who did not complete lower secondary or even primary education. In these cases, VSD always needs to incorporate elements of BE such as literacy, numeracy, and basic life skills. Tertiary education is supported in order to expand and enhance the performance of teachers and VSD trainers.

The concentration on education levels does not entail target-group age restrictions. Naturally, the main groups of beneficiaries are children and young people, but adults, and especially women, are also included. In VSD, the main target groups are young school-leavers, school "drop-outs" and the unemployed.

Specific objectives

In the field of BE, SDC is committed to framing its contribution in terms of the international goals agreed upon at Dakar (see annex III). Keeping in mind its comparative advantages, SDC's specific objectives are:

1. To promote education policies and practices (at the national and international level) that are in line with a diversified and integrated vision of basic education for all. SDC promotes a holistic approach that goes beyond formal primary education, and targets all persons of any age who cannot exert their rights to access quality basic education. This entails:
   a) *adapting education offers to diverse types of demands (according to learners' age, cultural context, mother tongue, working hours, socio-economic situation, etc.) and realising that non-formal education provision can be extremely useful in this respect;*
   b) *integrating education offers (be they formal or non-formal) into equitable and coherent education systems (i.e. getting past the*

"Sani Yafi daré douhou"

"Knowledge is the lantern of life"
(Hausa proverb, Niger)

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"Education is necessary, but it has to be used immediately. It's not for the sake of education only, but to respond to the immediate needs of people"

(Muhammad Ibrahim, Founding Director of CMES, Centre for Mass Education, Bangladesh, Meeting at SDC, 29 September 2008)

formal vs. non-formal debate by better recognition for apprenticeships, better financing and overall improvement of non-school offerings, integrated teacher training policies, etc.).

2. **To improve the quality and relevance of BE provisions.** SDC aims to ensure that educational offerings are in line with the cultural, social, economic and political contexts that learners are operating in and take account of local knowledge so as to improve the results obtained in the programmes and their use in the lives of learners.
    This entails improving "core components" such as the curricula themselves (what is taught and how), teacher training, parent and community participation and links with other levels of education (especially VSD) as well as other sectors of development.

In the field of VSD, SDC's objectives are in line with internationally agreed priorities as defined by organisations such as ILO and UNESCO. These respond to the dual objective of VSD: on one hand to contribute to the educational goal of preparing people (especially young people) for life and the world of work, and on the other hand, to contribute to the competitiveness of economies in more and more globalised contexts. SDC's main aims are:

1. **To promote widening of access to VSD.** SDC promotes the better inclusion of disadvantaged persons and the removal of access barriers to VSD (e.g. by lowering costs and formal entry requirements). It also supports widening the supply by including private training providers and the establishment of transparent competency-based standards and evaluation systems.

2. **To improve the relevance of VSD.** SDC promotes participatory mechanisms, including both public-sector and private-sector actors, in order to bring VSD into line with market demand and the potential of local economic development. It contributes to enhancing the quality of VSD offers and developing mechanisms that promote life-long learning (e.g. modular training programmes, certification systems, etc.). SDC also supports additional measures aimed at labour market insertion (by providing information and facilitating placement). ●

4. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

SDC adheres to the following ten operational guidelines when implementing activities in support of BE and/or VSD. Their importance and applicability however depend on context-specific situations and are the responsibility of the operational units. In addition, in all its activities, SDC harmonises its approach with that of other national and international entities in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration, making use of its comparative advantages (see chapter 3) and encouraging the participation of civil society and decentralised entities. Other specific instruments for BE and VSD will be drawn up in the future, based on these operational guidelines.

1. Basing all interventions on a systemic understanding of the education system and its context. This includes understanding all sub-sectors and their links and bridges, educational supply and demand, obstacles to access, educational policy and the normative framework, the roles and responsibilities of all national and international stakeholders involved, links with the job market, the demands of the partner country and the role that SDC can play to leverage local processes and to act as a facilitator.

2. Improving the quality of the available education and training provision as a function of the demand and the real situation of learners. This includes a special focus on the poor and the marginalised. SDC will pay particular attention to issues such as the teaching language and the subject mat-

"Tmousné takenne éhenne, aljahalett khached éhenne"

"Knowledge builds a tent, while ignorance knocks it down"
 (Tamacheq proverb, Mauritania)

ter taught (particularly with regard to local knowledge), as well as learning supports, including new information and communication technology. Another focus area is training and management of teachers and trainers. In the area of VSD, ensuring that programmes are in line with job-market demand is a priority. SDC also promotes opening channels through which local populations can express their education-related requirements (e.g. via strengthening parental and/or professional associations).

3. Identifying and helping remove barriers to accessing education (and to completing it). These barriers may be on the supply side: e.g. excessive cost; lack of quality and/or relevance; schedules; teaching language and/or subject matter issues; distance between training and domicile; lack of toilet facilities for girls; discriminatory practices towards girls, minorities, HIV/AIDS victims, etc.; excessively restrictive entrance requirements, etc.
The barriers may also be on the demand side: e.g. early marriage and discrimination against girls, underage working, and poverty.

4. Paying particular attention to disadvantaged groups (e.g. people in remote rural areas, marginalised urban neighbourhoods and conflict-affected areas; working children; ethnic minorities and nomadic populations; handicapped people; and women and girls) through the promotion of more inclusive educational policies and, if necessary, specific temporary measures such as affirmative action, tuition-fee exemptions and subsidies in order to bring about de facto equality.

5. Supporting educational innovations and their scaling up, based on their potential to improve both the quality and the equity of education (examples of such initiatives are: bilingual teaching, mobile training units, modern information and communications technologies, etc.) and implemented from the start in collaboration with national and international partners.

6. Facilitating democratic, participatory and coordinated approaches to education policies (including their design, implementation and monitoring). This can be effected via measures such as (a) support for consultation and coordination platforms among all interested parties, including civil-society representatives and local and other elected officials, who are all too often missing from sub-sector programmes, as well as the private sector; (b) capacity-building of stakeholders (in particular parents, women, and minorities) in order to help their voices be heard in these processes; (c) transparent processes of accountability towards citizens about the implementation of education policies; (d) support for local and national coordination mechanisms allowing each stakeholder involved to define its role clearly and play it effectively.

7. As part of a life-long-learning approach, promoting links between: (a) different "subsectors"; (b) between education levels, and (c) between education and other areas of development.
a) Links between BE and VSD: integrated programmes, particularly for young "school drop-outs" and adults (for example, programmes combining literacy with modular continuing education curricula linked to local socio-economic development).
b) Links between formal and non-formal education: for example, by integrating non-formal education into educational policy, by recognising skills acquired via non-formal education or practical application in order to have a more diverse range of training and qualifications, by building partnerships between governmental and non-governmental entities to help drop-outs and those without access to education, by promoting public financing of non-formal education, etc.
c) Links between education and citizenship (in particular through participation in local governance): policies on the rights of children, equal rights for women, health, local and regional economic development, promotion of the private-sector and decent work, cultural and language policies (which encourage interculturality), conflict prevention and peace-building.

8. Promoting gender and governance as cross-cutting issues, in line with SDC's existing approaches and instruments. This includes moving towards a rights-based approach to education.

9. Monitoring and assessing both the results and the outcomes of education. This entails improving assessments of the results of learning (have learning goals been met?), but it also entails assessments of outcomes, in terms of improving standards of living, empowerment, satisfaction of learners, job placement, etc. SDC promotes statistical measurement of results and outcomes for non-formal education and VSD in particular.

10. Promoting adequate and sustainable public and private financing for education, both at local and at national level and in particular for NFE and VSD through the recognition of BE and VSD as priorities in national and international development policies;

"Ko nedo duri ko janata"

"What you have learned is what you can pass on" (Peul proverb, Mali)

dialogue with governments in order to convince them to devote sufficient public funds to these sectors; the creation of dedicated financing mechanisms for sectors such as non-formal education and VSD; public-private development partnerships in particular for the financing of VSD; and the allocation of public funds at regional and local levels. ●

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5. APPLICATION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are designed to provide a framework for and guide to SDC's work at the national, regional and international levels as well as the mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The guidelines are applied in multiple ways.

For bilateral work, the guidelines serve as a framework and can be applied and adapted according to the national context, the demands of partner countries, SDC's "competitive advantage", and whether the Paris Declaration must be adhered to in terms of alignment and harmonisation. In addition, SDC continues to play a pioneering role by using additional instruments, such as direct partnerships, which enable its activities to be flexible, innovative and in close proximity to stakeholders.

For multilateral work, the guidelines help to define how strategic partners are selected and/or how SDC works with these partners. In an effort to create further synergies and exchanges with its bilateral activities, SDC collaborates primarily with multilateral organisations in similar fields. However, SDC also fulfils its role as a Member State and/or a responsible donor capable of working harmoniously with other countries, depending on the organisation's collective interests and its effectiveness.

Implications for BE:

- To continue to actively participate in institutional and technical dialogue with specialised institutions, particularly UNESCO and its various institutes.
- To participate in key efforts and initiatives to monitor and achieve the Dakar Goals for Education For All (EFA) and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- To pay particular attention to regional political dialogue, particularly in Africa, in order to ensure a link between actions supported in the field and key political entities.
- To support international civil-society organisations so that they can make their voices heard in regional and international political dialogue on education and training.
- To promote successful SDC projects within multilateral organisations in order to encourage their scaling up.

Implications for VSD:

- To continue to actively participate in institutional and technical dialogue with specialised institutions, particularly ILO and its regional institutions.
- To continue to take part in institutional and technical dialogue with other partner institutions with a view to relaunching a multi-donor group for VSD.
- To continuously strengthen partnerships with civil society and the private sector, either through direct collaboration or by sharing experiences. ●

"My son is teaching me. He is encouraging me to try new ways of doing things instead of doing what and how our fathers had been doing"

(Father, Ethiopia)

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SDC's Management is responsible for implementing the 2009-2012 Message from the Swiss Parliament and puts in place the necessary framework so that relevant activities can be carried out in priority areas and in accordance with these guidelines.

The management teams of the West Africa and Latin America divisions are responsible for setting priority issues ("sub-issues") for BE and VSD respectively, taking into account the needs of the institution as a whole. Through knowledge management and networks, they promote the quality of SDC's work in these areas. They are also responsible for managing multilateral projects (particularly with UNESCO, or the FTI for the West Africa division) and regional projects (e.g. DEDA) and represent SDC within international entities. The divisions also supervise the work of the Focal Points, to which they delegate part of their tasks.

The BE and VSD operational divisions are responsible for implementing projects and programmes and for managing partnerships with other organisations. This includes all steps in the management process, from planning to evaluation. Those in charge of the operational divisions' theme-based programmes receive specialised support from the networks and Focal Points concerned. To ensure that monitoring and assessment tools are fully adapted to the specificities of BE and VSD, the Focal Points, networks and quality assurance section work together closely.

- encouraging documentation and communication, particularly concerning the results of SDC support;
- developing the skills of members through ongoing training.

To achieve these objectives, the two networks have developed the following principles:
The work of the "Education" and "Employment and Income" networks is based on the concerns of members. The networks build on certain aspects of the guidelines that they deem relevant and develop complementary instruments if necessary.

They also facilitate learning and improve practices by organising opportunities to share experiences based on the interests of members and key aspects of the guidelines.

The two networks work together closely in order to promote links between BE and VSD. They

The Focal Points are responsible for promoting knowledge management, facilitating the coordination of the theme-based networks and organising specialised ongoing training for employees working in BE and VSD. In addition, they represent SDC within Swiss and international entities and supervise key knowledge management projects (setting up national and international networks, etc.). Upon request, they also act as consultants to the operational divisions' topic specialists and to other colleagues. Part of their work may be delegated to members of the theme-based networks.

The "Education" and "Employment and Income" (for VSD) networks are made up of COOF programme coordinators working in these fields as well as the relevant programme coordinators and Focal Points based at headquarters and in the field. They may also include SDC partners both in Switzerland and abroad. The COOFs and other operational units are responsible for ensuring that programme coordinators are involved in topical exchanges in order to encourage learning and promote the quality of the institution's work. The networks' main objectives are:

- improving learning and skills development through good information flow, increased collaboration between COOFs, and exchanging and capitalising on experiences;

ensure that there is a regular exchange of information and experiences between members of the two networks (e.g. through a newsletter and joint workshops). They also pool certain resources (e.g. consultants).

Furthermore, they interact with other networks within SDC on related issues (e.g. rural development, decentralisation, gender, etc.).

They also ensure the link between SDC and skills centres, specialised organisations, NGOs and knowledge networks both in Switzerland and at an international level. ●

ANNEX I: GLOSSARY [7]

Adult education   Educational activities, offered through formal, non-formal or informal frameworks, targeted at adults and aimed at advancing or substituting for initial education and training. The purpose may be to (a) complete a given level of formal education or professional qualification; (b) acquire knowledge and skills in a new field (not necessarily for a qualification); and/or (c) refresh or update knowledge and skills.

Adult literacy rate   Number of literate persons aged 15 and above, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. Different ways of defining and assessing literacy yield different results regarding the number of persons designated as literate.

Basic education   The whole range of educational activities that take place in various settings and that aim to meet the basic learning needs defined by Education For All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990). According to ISCED, basic education comprises primary education, which is the first level of basic education, as well as the first part of secondary education, which is the second level of basic education. It also comprises various public and private non-formal and informal educational activities designed to respond to the particular learning needs of people of all ages.

Basic learning needs   According to the World Declaration on Education for All (1990): "…These needs comprise essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as 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. The scope of basic learning needs, and how they should be met, varies by country and culture, and changes over time".

Certificate   Document that formally recognises the achievements of an individual learner. Typically awarded by designated national bodies.

Competence   Combines skills, knowledge and attitudes. In training, competence is defined as the demonstrated ability to perform something well. In employment, competence is defined as the ability to meet the demands of specific work roles and the requirements of employment in a given economy. This notion of the term includes not only task-specific skills, but also all related core skills which make people employable (Vetnet).

Competency-based training (CBT)   CBT gives more emphasis to trainees' ability to master specific practical tasks or competencies than to the level or type of certification or to the length of training they have received.

Curriculum   Training programme: Format to structure and arrange content, venue, methodology and timing of courses or programmes. In modern Vocational Skills Development, it often contains an array of typical "learn & work assignments".

Dual system   Term to designate a systematic combination of school-based and work-based training, ranging from simple internships within a company to fully elaborated national systems with co-determination between industry and government. Dual training is one type of delivery of "cooperative training" or "alternating training".

Early childhood   Childhood from birth to age eight.

Education for All Development Index (EDI) Composite index aimed at measuring overall progress towards EFA. At present, the EDI incorporates four of the most easily quantifiable EFA goals: universal primary education as measured by the net enrolment ratio, adult literacy as measured by the adult literacy rate, gender as measured by the gender-specific EFA index, and quality of education as measured by the survival rate to Grade 5.

Equity   This term refers to the extent to which education access and provision are justly distributed for both children and adults. Equity in education entails reducing discrepancies based on gender, economic status, place of domicile, ethnic group, language and similar characteristics.

7   Sources: UNESCO, Education for All – 2008 Global Monitoring Report. *Education for all by 2015: Will we make it?* Paris, 2007; UNESCO; UNEVOC; ILO; UIS; www.vetnet.ch; *DFID briefing paper on Technical and Vocational Skills Development*, April 2007; Swisscontact: "Good Practice", March 2007.

Gender-specific EFA index (GEI)   Composite index measuring relative achievement in gender parity in total participation in primary and secondary education as well as gender parity in adult literacy.

Informal education   The term refers to a life-long process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences and the educative influences and resources in his/her environment – e.g. family and neighbours, work and play, the marketplace, the library, and the mass media.

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)   Classification system designed to serve as an instrument for assembling, compiling and presenting comparable indicators and statistics concerning education both within individual countries and internationally. The system was introduced in 1976 and revised in 1997 (ISCED97).

Literacy   According to UNESCO's 1958 definition, the term refers to the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life. The concept of literacy has since evolved to embrace multiple skill domains, each conceived on a scale of different mastery levels and serving different purposes. Many today view literacy as the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials in various contexts. Literacy is a process of learning that enables individuals to achieve personal goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in the community and wider society.

Module/modular training   In VET/VSD a module is a self-contained unit of instruction, for which measurable learning objectives can be identified. Sometimes used as a synonym for "course".
Modular training in a broad sense refers to a programme design that consists of independent modules which can be taken in a flexible way (as regards interval, sequence and number) in order to achieve a variety of possible objectives.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
Elaborate and comprehensive system of standards which encompasses competency standards for all major occupational areas, and possible qualification levels within each occupational area.
A NQF is the basis for the assessment, certification and accreditation of skills and competencies of individuals, irrespective of how and where they have been learned (e.g. formal or non-formal education and/or training, on-the-job learning, etc.). NQFs have predominantly been developed in Anglophone settings.

Net attendance rate (NAR)   Number of pupils in the official age group for a given level of education who attend school in that level, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

Net enrolment ratio (NER)   Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group. Can be over 100% because of late admissions or repeats.

Non-formal education   Learning activities typically organised outside the formal education system. In different contexts, non-formal education covers educational activities aimed at imparting adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children and youth, life skills, vocational skills, and general culture. Such activities usually have clear learning objectives, but vary in terms of duration, in terms of whether they confer certification for acquired learning, and in organisational structure.

Obligatory/compulsory schooling   Educational programmes legally required for children and young adults; generally defined in terms of years, age groups, or both.

Primary cohort completion rate   Number of pupils who finish their last year of primary school expressed as a percentage of entrants into the first year.

Sector-wide programme   Programme in which all significant financial support is aligned under a single government-led sector policy and spending programme, and in which a consistent methodology is applied across the sector with a gradual implementation of governmental financing and reporting procedures.

Skill   Skill is the expertise needed to perform a task or to do a job. It describes the requirements of a job, or the ability of people to perform jobs. There are different types of skills:

Core skills: The skills which everyone in a particular economy needs to gain employment, remain employable and develop careers. They are not specific to any particular occupation. They are also referred to as key competencies, transferable skills, portable skills or essential skills. Core skills usually include skills for communication, learning to learn, teamwork, numeracy, and language skills. Entrepreneurial skills are increasingly added to the concept of core skills.

Occupational skills: Neutral and general term which summarises those skills which are required to perform an occupation in a specific economy. They are prescribed by the curriculum of a training programme.

Skills Development (SD) and **Vocational Skills Development (VSD)**   Skills Development has emerged in development terminology to describe a broadly defined notion of vocational education and training. As opposed to VET, SD implies that skills acquisition does not exclusively take place in formalised training settings, but in any sort of combination of training, coaching, counselling, learning-by-doing, self-learning etc. While the notion of SD is very broad, VSD strengthens the focus on employability and the preparation of people for gainful activities under whichever employment status. But VSD refers not only to narrow task skills, but includes those core skills which are necessary in a particular economy to make people employable (see above).

Standards   Standards describe how well a task has to be performed and are utilised to measure or estimate performance levels. In VET-systems the definition of training or skills standards is increasingly a national level process, detached from training providers, individual ministries or departments. Standards within VET-systems may be legal or statutory requirements (e.g. national training standards, national skills standards, occupational standards), or they may be voluntarily adopted standards by social partners, professional bodies or individual organisations. See also "NQF".

Student/teacher ratio   Ratio of students per teacher per given level.

(Technical and) Vocational Education and Training (TVET, VET)   TVET or VET is a combination of ILO-preferred (human resources training and development) and UNESCO-preferred (technical and vocational education) terminology. It addresses mainly the formal economy and education and training at secondary and tertiary level. It aims at making people employable, including their ability to cope with all aspects of the social, economic and technical environment. In the area of development cooperation the terms are nowadays often replaced by the broader term (Vocational) Skills Development.

Training providers (TP)   TPs can either be public or private. Public TPs either belong directly to a ministry or a semi-government body or they have a defined semi-autonomous status under a local board. Among private TPs there are three distinctly different categories: private TPs established as for-profit organisations; as non-profit NGOs (or as a training unit to an NGO); or as private enterprises acting as a training venue for any type of cooperative training.

Transition rate to secondary education   New entrants to the first grade of secondary education in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in the final grade of primary education in the previous year.

Youth literacy rate   Number of literate persons aged 15 to 24, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. ●

ANNEX II: STATISTICAL DATA ON EDUCATION AND VSD WORLDWIDE [8]

Consistent progress in terms of access

- The number of out-of-school children dropped from 96 to 72 million between 1999 and 2005.
- Most regions have largely succeeded in implementing universal primary education (UPE). Although UPE has not been achieved in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern and Western Asia, these regions have substantially increased enrolment rates.
- Between 1999 and 2005 the secondary education gross enrolment ratio (GER) rose from 60% to 66%.

Major challenges remain in terms of access and equity

- Staffing for programmes concerning the protection and education of small children has remained flat.
- 57% of the world's out-of-school children are girls.
- 70% of the world's out-of-school children live in Sub-Saharan Africa or Southeast Asia.
- 23 countries may not achieve UPE by 2015 because their net enrolment rates are decreasing.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, access to secondary education is very limited: only one primary-school-leaver in five continues into secondary education.

Literacy challenges remain

- 771 million adults are illiterate, and 64% of them are women; these numbers have not changed since the early 1990s.
- In Southern and Western Asia, the illiteracy rate in the 15-24 demographic is 65% among young women and 18% among young men.
- In Africa, 75% of women living in rural areas are illiterate.
- SDC priority countries in Africa and Asia (in particular Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Benin, Chad, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal and Niger) are all among the countries with the lowest literacy rates

Quality: a crucial issue

- In 70% of Sub-Saharan countries as well as Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan over one third of pupils admitted to primary school don't make it to the end of the final year.
- SACMEQ [9] studied 13 African countries and concluded that pupils have one third of the educational materials they need in their schools.

- In Central and Eastern Europe, 20% of 8th-graders are considered insufficient in math.
- In Burkina Faso and Benin, less than 10% of teachers have attained the minimal requirements for teaching, i.e. having finished the first level of secondary education. In Mozambique, one third of primary teachers have not been trained and one third have reached 6th grade, with one year of teacher training.
- The average student-teacher ratio in Asia is 40/1. In Bangladesh it is 55/1, and the ratio is as high as 70/1 in some Sub-Saharan countries.
- To reach the 2015 UPE goal there is a need for 18 million more teachers globally.
- Relevance remains a crucial issue for education programmes: they need to take account of the needs and priorities of the learners, their families and the larger community.

Funding

- Basic education gets less than 2% of bilateral public development aid.
- Almost 60% of bilateral funding commitments for education go to post-secondary education. BE receives 28.3% overall.
- In many countries literacy programmes receive only 1% of education funding.
- The cost of getting an education remains a major obstacle for millions of children and young people despite the elimination of tuition fees in 14 countries since 2000.

Vocational Skills Development (VSD)

There is widespread agreement among international organisations and other sources that there is a serious dearth of statistical data on VSD. UNESCO's statistical reporting unit has provided several reasons for this lack of data, which makes it difficult to get a holistic overview of VSD: [10]

- In most countries, VSD is not a clearly defined field.
- TVET is often overseen by several different ministries rather than being the exclusive purview of the ministry of education.
- The offer of VSD providers is more diverse than for BE. VSD comprises: formal, non-formal and informal education; short-, medium- and long-term programmes; part-time programmes; both schools and technical centres; on-the-job training that may actually be provided at

Countries/regions	TVET affiliations as percentage of total secondary enrolment
Least developed African countries	5.7%
Least-developed Asian countries	1.2%
Sub-Saharan Africa	7.7%
Latin American and Caribbean countries	10.0%
Eastern Asia and Pacific	17.1%
Least-developed countries	2.6%
All developing countries	10.4%
OECD members (except USA)	24.8%

the workplace; both governmental and private providers; and training provided both on a for-profit and not-for-profit basis.

Little TVET on secondary level
- Very few students at the secondary level of formal education participate in TVET, as shown in the following table:[11]
- There is high intra-regional variability in these numbers. In Mali (1996), TVET participation stood at 11.6% of total secondary affiliation, whereas in Niger the figure is 0.8%.[12]
- In Bosnia, participation is 73%, while in Albania it stands at 15%.[13]

Regional variation in gender parity
- In Niger, Ethiopia, Uganda, Eritrea, Malawi and Namibia the participation rate of women in TVET is less than 15%, while in Benin and Chad the situation is somewhat better, with a rate of around 35%.[14]
- In the CIS and the Balkans the gender distribution is more balanced, except for Albania, where men account for 70% of participants. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is almost gender parity, with 53% for men and 47% for women,[15] while in Moldavia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan more women than men take part in TVET.[16]
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, women make up 53% of participants in TVET programmes on secondary level on average. Bolivia has the high mark, with 65%, while Cuba is below the average at 44%.[17]

TVET spending
- The only data available on spending on TVET dates from the 1990s and covers only the CIS and some Sub-Saharan countries.[18]

- Among SDC's priority countries where data is available, the highest funding rate for TVET is in Mali (9.1% of total education spending).
- In Moldavia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan spending rates are very low (0.3%, 0.3% and 1.7% respectively).
- For purposes of comparison, in Switzerland TVET got 12.9% of the total public education budget in 2005.[19]

Little data on non-formal education
- The data available on TVET, VSD and BE generally cover only formal education. It is therefore difficult to assess the importance of the non-formal sector.[20]
- Nevertheless, NFE covers most VSD (and sometimes even BE) needs in developing countries.
- For VSD, the World Bank estimates that most learners in the least developed countries are in non-formal programmes (for example, in Tanzania, 92% of VSD providers are non-governmental; the figure is 82% in Zambia and about 66% in Mali).[21] ●

11 DFID Briefing, April 2007, adapted from UNESCO-IIEP report, 2004, *Promoting Skills Development*

12 Atchoarena, David and Delluc, André, 2002, *Revisiting Technical and Vocational Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. An Update on Trends, Innovations and Challenges.* IIEP/UNESCO, p. 40

13 European Training Foundation ETF, 2002a, *Central and Eastern Europe: Key Indicators on Vocational Education and Training*, p. 34

14 Atchoarena and Delluc, 2002, p. 44

15 ETF, 2002a, p. 35

16 ETF, 2002b, *CIS and Mongolia: Key Indicators on Vocational Education and Training*

17 UIS, http://stats.uis.unesco.org; Bolivia: 2003 data; other countries mentioned: 2005 data

18 Atchoarena and Delluc, 2002, and ETF, 2002b

19 FDEA, 2008, *Facts and Figures. Vocational Education and Training in Switzerland*, p. 12

20 UNESCO, 2007, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008*, p. 59–61

21 World Bank, 2004, *Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, referenced in DFID Briefing*, April 2007, *Technical and Vocational Skills Development*, p. 29

ANNEX III: THE EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS AND MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Dakar Framework for Action adopted in 2000 by the World Education Forum defined six Education for All (EFA) goals:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
The eight MDGs were approved by world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000; they are at the heart of an agenda for reducing poverty. For each goal, one or more targets have been set, most for 2015. The first goal cannot be achieved without education, and two other goals and two targets make explicit reference to education.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education (*Target 3:* ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of good quality primary schooling).

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women (*Target 4:* eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015). ●

ANNEX IV: THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

SDC adopted a human rights policy[22] in 2006 and its implementation entails taking account of this aspect in all sector programmes and strategies.

The right to education is set out within the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which took effect in 1976 and has 143 signatory countries as of 18 September 2000. Article 13 of that document stipulates that:

1. "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognise that, with a view to achieving the full realisation of this right:
a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;
b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;
c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;
d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;
e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph I of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State".

The States party to the Covenant must regularly provide reports on its application to a committee of independent experts[23] which cannot, contrary to the human rights committee[24], handle complaints. It may however draw up observations that specify the obligations Party States have as a result of signing the Covenant, in particular that of ensuring, implementing and protecting the right to education.

The obligations incumbent upon signatory countries relative to the right to education comprise several aspects or essential characteristics of teaching:[25] resources, access, acceptability and adaptability. These qualitative criteria determine assessment of implementation of the right to education, and may influence the choice of indicators.

- **1. Resources:** There must be enough institutions and programmes, and structures and infrastructures must be sufficient. Specific examples are: shelter, sanitary facilities for both boys and girls, drinking water, an adequately trained teaching staff whose remuneration is in line with local standards, enough teaching material of sufficient quality, library and IT access.
- **2. Accessibility:** Access should be wholly open and non-discriminatory. This involves three levels of accessibility.
  Non-discrimination: Education must be available for all, including the most fragile population groups, without any distinctions of a legal, national, ethnic, physical (i. e. handicaps) or otherwise discriminatory nature.
  Physical access: The teaching must be physically accessible via reasonable means (e. g. neighbourhood schools) or via IT (distance learning).
  Economic access: Education should be financially possible for all, and primary education

22 *SDC's Human Rights Policy: Towards a Life in Dignity – Realizing rights for poor people*, 2006
23 The Committee on economic, social and cultural rights
24 Created in 1975 to monitor the application of the Covenant
25 General Observation No. 13 (1999)

26 The obligations of States Party to the Covenant vary according to educational level, with a preference for primary education, where government-provided free access is obligatory

should be universally accessible and free. Free education should be progressively implemented in secondary and post-secondary education.[26]

- **3. Acceptability:** The teaching should be seen as useful, culturally appropriate and high quality by both students and their parents, and it should be in line with its objectives.
- **4. Adaptability:** "Education has to be flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings".

Several other agreements and international declarations mention the right to education. Examples are the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Education For All agreement adopted in Jomtien in 1990.

The right to education embodies the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights. It is essential as a means to fully and effectively realise one's civil and political rights. In this sense, it can be useful to distinguish three dimensions: the right **to** education, with the emphasis on access, but also rights **within and through** education, relative to which the focus is on **quality** and **relevance** in education.

SDC's commitment to promote the right to education is based on two complementary approaches: first, strengthening the capacities of rights holders to effectively exercise their rights (especially regarding disadvantaged individuals and groups); second, strengthening the capacities of duty holders (mainly governments) to fulfil their obligations in all their various aspects. ●