



Mission Report

The III ForumBIE 2030 – International Summit on Balanced and Inclusive Education
Djibouti City, the Republic of Djibouti
27-29 January, 2020

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A. SEAMEO Official and Staff Member on Mission

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B. Background, Description and Objectives of the Activity

1. Over the course of 2017, the Education Relief Foundation (ERF) organised a series of high-level regional consultation meetings for Balanced and Inclusive Education (BIE) in Sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia, Latin America and Europe.
2. Upon completion of its 2017 series of regional consultation meetings, ERF hosted, in December 2017, the First ForumBIE 2030 at the United Nations in Geneva (UNOG) to present the collated recommendations of these meetings to the participating ambassadors, policymakers, partners, development research institutions and civil society organisations.
3. On 20 – 22 November 2018, in cooperation with the Federal Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) of the United Mexican States, ERF convened the II ForumBIE 2030 in Mexico City. The II ForumBIE 2030 concluded with the signing of the International Call for Balanced and Inclusive Education (ICBIE), the expression of a collective aspiration for Balanced and Inclusive Education for all.
4. The Education Relief Foundation (ERF), jointly with the Republic of Djibouti, convened the Third Forum on Balanced and Inclusive Education (III ForumBIE) 2030. The Forum held in on 27-29 January 2020 aimed to develop strategies for achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), on inclusive and equitable quality education. The Forum concluded with the signing of *the Universal Declaration on Balanced and Inclusive Education* (UDBIE) and the establishment of new Organisation of Educational Cooperation. The forum also served as a platform for for international stakeholders to share experiences, best practices, and develop efficient collaborations in Balanced and Inclusive Education.

C. Organizer

1. Education Relief Foundation
2. The Republic of Djibouti

D. Participants

The conference was attended by approximately 400 education stakeholders from 36 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia, Latin America and Europe.

E. Highlight of the Activity/Summary Points

During the three-day event, Delegates and representatives from 38 governments, civil society organisations and academia gathered to discuss common objectives of achieving 'balanced and inclusive education' through concrete steps. These steps are described in the Universal Declaration of Balanced and Inclusive Education (UDBIE), the important document that was presented and signed at the Summit.

The focus of the Summit was not only the signing of the UDBIE, it was also an opportunity for stakeholders to highlight the most pressing challenges faced by countries in achieving inclusive education. Among the issues that were raised: how much progress has been made so far; which groups face more difficult access to education (i.e. women, indigenous populations, minorities, disabled people), where are people struggling the most to have access to education and what can be done to take concrete action.

Women and girls are the ones who have more difficulty in accessing education. About one third of countries in the developing world have not achieved gender parity in primary education. Moreover, data by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), shows that only 35 percent of students studying STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in higher education globally are women. At the Summit, many delegates emphasized the need to include more concrete action to empower women to access education.

During the informal session of the three-day event, delegates from 38 countries discussed the upcoming creation of the Organization for Educational Cooperation. They also fully explored the dynamics of the challenges to achieve inclusive education, examining trends and facts in different regions – Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa – while also proposing concrete actions to “tailor education to local contexts”, “prepare students to address world challenges”, “transforming the dynamics of the classrooms” and “responsibility of the academia” in these processes.

At the Closing Ceremony of the Third Forum BIE 2030, 38 governments, civil society organizations and academic entities became the first to sign the Universal Declaration of Balanced and Inclusive Education (UDBIE). Furthermore, 30 signatories, including governments and civil society organizations, agreed to establish the Organization of Educational Cooperation (OEC), a new international organization from the Global South with the aim to create platforms and mechanisms of solidarity-based technical and financial cooperation and support for educational reforms. Sheikh Manssour Bin Musallam, President of The Education Relief Foundation was elected as the first Secretary General of the OEC.



Figure 1. Opening Ceremony of the IIIForumBIE 2030.



Figure 2. Sheikh Manssour Bin Musallam, President of The Education Relief Foundation, (second from left) who sponsored the Summit, was elected as the first Secretary General of the OEC. In this photo, on his right, is Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti.



Figure 3. DDPD and Sheikh Manssour Bin Musallam, President of The Education Relief Foundation during Dinner Reception

F. Role/Participation of SEAMEO

On behalf of the SEAMEO Secretariat Director, DDPD participate actively in all session. However, DDPD did not sign any commitment especially *on the Universal Declaration on Balanced and Inclusive Education (UDBIE)*. Informally, DDPD was able to manage to discuss with Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam President, Education Relief Foundation and Secretary-General-elect, Organisation of Educational Cooperation. Although SEAMEO will not sign the UDBIE, SEAMEO will be ready to collaborate with the ERF to promote Balanced and Inclusive education.

G. Follow-up Actions Needed

SEAMEO Secretariat may submit a proposal to ERF in conjunction with SEAMEO Education Agenda Priority Area 2 – Addressing barrier to inclusion.