



Ministry of Education

ERITREA:

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

DRAFT

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I. Introduction

1. Eritrea is a newly born nation, which gained a hard-won independence in 1991 after 30 years of armed struggle. Eritrea formally gained its independence on May 24, 1993 after a historical and internationally supervised referendum. It has a population of about 3.6 million with an estimated annual population growth of 3 percent.
2. The country has passed through subsequent colonisers, the last of which was responsible for the overall collapse of the country's infrastructure and to the dismantling of its economic foundations. During the war for independence, the quality of education in Eritrea was at its lowest since the colonisers did not give priority to education. Eritrean youth did not get educational opportunity that would enable them to be productive citizens. In short, the then existing political system was working to disintegrate the social, economic, cultural values and political aspiration of Eritreans, a factor to the deterioration of national development.
3. During the war for independence, on the other hand, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) established schools in the liberated areas and laid the foundations for education even under the difficult conditions to raise the overall awareness of Eritreans in enhancing the struggle for independence and for the socio-economic development of the country at the same time. This experience became the foundation for establishing a National Educational System in Eritrea after independence.
4. After independence, Eritrea has made significant progress in education. Among the major progresses made is in the expansion of educational opportunities. A comparison of 1991/92 and 2001/02 academic years reveals that GER for elementary school has almost doubled from 36.3 to 61.0; middle and secondary school GER has more than doubled from 20.1 to 44.6; and from 12.2 to 23.7 respectively whereas the NER has increased from 22.4 to 42.7 from 7.0 to 12.3, and from 8.4 to 14.1 respectively. Consequently, the number of Elementary and Middle schools increased from 273 in 1991/92 to 747 in 2001/02 (174% increase). Similarly, the number of Secondary Schools increased from 19 in 1991/92 to 44 in 2001/02 (132% increase). Moreover, the number of Technical School increased from 1 in 1991/92 to 10 in 2001/02 (900% increase). As a result, the number of teachers also increased considerably from 4,504 in 1991/90 to 10,456 in the year 2001/02 (132% increase).
5. Despite all efforts, access to education is inadequate. Only 40% of the school age children in Eritrea have access to primary education, 10.5% to middle level education, 13.6% to secondary level education. Moreover, only 4.5% of the children between 4-5 years get pre-school education at the moment and 70% of the adult population are illiterate. In addition to limited access, the quality of education offered at all levels is unsatisfactory as can be witnessed from the about 70% educational wastage and low level of internal efficiency coupled with lack of adequate capacity at all levels. Gender disparities still persist, there is inequitable distribution of education, and capacity is lacking at all levels. Teachers are in short supply and there is limited support for them.
6. For these reasons, immediate measures need to be taken to transform education from its current state to bring a new, forward looking, flexible and efficient educational arrangement in place. The tasks are not easy. Many predictable and unpredictable challenges might be encountered. Nevertheless, the government will work, with determination, to correct shortcomings and imbalances inherent in the educational system by offering equitable and

relevant learning opportunities in line with the priorities and human power needs of the country.

II. Overview of the Education Sector

Introduction

7. The educational system of Eritrea follows a uniform secular curriculum that covers all school-going age children and adults without distinction of class, sex, religion or ethnic group. The present formal school system consists of two years pre-school education for children aged 5-6 years, elementary education (Grade1-5) for the age group of 7-11, Middle school Education (Grades 6-7) for the age group of 12-13, and secondary school education (Grades 8-11) for the age group of 14 -17. This formal education system also includes Technical and Vocational Education and Tertiary Education. In the non-formal system, Adult Literacy and Continuing Education programs are provided for adults who, for various reasons, do not get opportunity in the formal education system. Nevertheless, there is an opportunity for mobility for the dropouts of the formal education system to continue in the non-formal route; and for adults, who manage to progress educationally, the opportunity to join Secondary and Tertiary Education is always there.

Major Accomplishments and Challenges

Accomplishments

8. Since independence, access at all levels has increased tremendously. Success has been registered in the provision of educational opportunities to the disadvantaged ethnic groups and the rural areas. Similarly gender disparity has decreased to a great extent. Regions, which were deprived of educational opportunity, have been given due attention and many citizens have benefited from this engagement. Making mother tongue the medium of instruction at the elementary level has enabled not only to promote equality among all citizens but also to deliver education in the language that the students can best understand.
9. In Vocational Education and Training expansion of schools and trades have been made and managed to provide work force to the labour market needs. Through the Adult Literacy program progress has been made and a decrease of the illiteracy rate has been witnessed. Making ECD as an integral part of the wider educational process has also been another area of achievement towards ensuring the right of every child to education. It has enabled to create opportunity for many children requiring education. Many KG schools and rural children's centres have been constructed, an ECCE Procedural Guideline has been developed, and initial and in-service training for KG teachers and community care givers have been provided.
10. The establishment of EMIS and its expansion to all the zobas and to majority of the sub-zobas has been a major achievement in the education sector. Consequently, communication has been improved, database has been developed, and planning, and decision-making has been reinforced. Although capacity has been lacking with the various management and planning training programs, decentralisation has been promoted with the establishment of EMIS. In general Eritrea's engagement to put national educational policy in to practice - not ignoring its reaffirmation to respect and work towards the implementation of EFA and

Millennium Goals - have enabled to improve access, equity, quality, and relevance of the education provision.

11. Other area of achievement is the initiative made to develop human capacity of the sector. Many teachers and educational administrators have been given the opportunity to grow academically in various fields of studies in different institutes and universities abroad and in country. As a result the qualification of the teaching force and that of other educators have been upgraded, which has brought a qualitative change in the education offered. Many others are still pursuing their studies for the same reason.
12. Due attention has been given to girls education over the last decade to ensure greater participation of girls and equitable distribution of education. As a result substantial improvement has been made in educating girls even if the gender-parity index is still low. The enrolment of girls in 2000/01 has grown to 192,871 as compared to 96, 272 in 1991/92 (an increase of 100%).

Challenges

13. Despite the encouraging improvement in access, many areas are still educationally uncovered. With the continuously increasing population this would further be exacerbated. Acute shortage of classrooms and teachers continue to affect education provision and quality. There are over 100 schools functioning under shades due to lack of normal classrooms. Pre-school education has not got the emphasis it deserves that almost all children do not enjoy the opportunity. A lot of children demanding basic education are still withdrawing before mastering essential basic skills and there still exists high repetition rate in gross terms. The high emphasis that has been placed on basic education has created a massive flow of students demanding secondary education. Consequently, a large number of students are still competing for scarce space at this level. Apart from this, many over-aged students are enrolled in the system. Due to limited access, school facilities are overused, resulting to double shift classes. Enrolment rates for girls across all levels have remained lower than for boys throughout the school system.
14. The current **curriculum** is predominantly supply driven and has little relevance to the country's job market demand. Neither does it satisfy the needs and interests of the trainees. Although steps have been taken to improve the curriculum since its introduction in schools since 1991/92, the changes and improvements made were too limited in their scope, intensity and coverage.
15. The educational opportunity that has been provided at the **tertiary** level has been very limited. More than 70% of the population is still **illiterate**. There is still acute shortage of trained teachers and facilities. During the past two years, efforts were made to update policy and develop a strategic program aimed at institutionalising **special needs education (SNE)** as a system to address not only the educational needs of the disabled but also the resource needs that will enable them to function properly. In this respect, education sector has a considerably challenging shortage of institutional capacity at all levels that bring about inequity of education provision.
16. Insufficient funding in education has always remained a major problem together with lack of donor co-operation. This has delayed long-term budgetary and planning mechanism, decentralisation process, and introduction and promotion of modern technology as instructional tool. There is significant disparity among the zobas in terms of access to

education. Enrolment rates for girls have always remained lower than that of boys and there exists differing enrolment rate of girls between levels. Although Education in Eritrea is inclusive in principle, there is limited resource to cater for many needs of disabled learners in the mainstream of education nor is the existing infrastructure convenient to them. The involvement of Private sector at all levels is very poor and has impaired the improvement of the quality of education. The establishment of Education Act has been found relevant for the motivation of private sector.

17. During the past decade, the education sector of Eritrea has gone through various stages that were often neither smooth nor upward moving. Significant strides and worthwhile accomplishments have been witnessed during this period. Yet, there have remained many challenges to be met to provide improved access, equity, quality and relevant education. The time is now ripe to make all the necessary changes and reforms so that the Eritrean education system would measure up to the needs of the nation. It is upon this background and reflections of past trends and experience that Rapid Transformation of Eritrean Education System has become indispensable to achieve **relevant quality education for all**.

The main rationale behind the need for a rapid transformation can be summarised by:

- a) All wastage of manpower, resources, efforts and time in the educational system must be abolished in as much as it is humanly possible;
- b) All doors and opportunities must be open to all Eritreans to develop to their full potential both professionally and personally;
- c) Education must be employment oriented such that at the end of any level of education any person can find gainful employment commensurate with his/her level of education or training;
- d) The standards and quality of education and training in the education system must be high enough that products of the system would have a high degree of acceptability in the international arena of education and employment.

III. National Education Policy

18. Education in Eritrea is a fundamental human right and a lifelong process by which all individuals are given opportunities to attain their potential as all rounded citizens. Parallel to this, the development of a competent and skilled public as well as private sector service is a pre-requisite for the attainment of the government's overriding national development objectives. Consequently, the provision of Education in Eritrea envisages towards:

- The creation of a modern, technologically advanced and internationally competitive economy;
- The establishment of broad based education incorporating widespread dissemination of skills and languages and extensive human capital formation.

19. Since Eritrea's greatest asset is its people, revitalising citizens with relevant education and training is the only means by which the overall socio-economic development of the country can be achieved. Thus, the general objectives of educational provision are:

- To produce a population equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and culture for a self-reliant and modern economy;

- To develop self-consciousness and self-motivation in the population to fight poverty, disease, and all the attendant causes of backwardness and ignorance;
- To make basic education available to all.

Policy Objectives

20. Eritreans, like any other people, require education and training to be able to develop to their full capacities in order to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, and to improve the quality of their lives. The following main Policy Objectives, therefore, target the government's commitments to develop Eritrea's human capacity in order to establish a self-reliant population and a sustainable socio-economic development in the country.
21. Expanding and improving comprehensive **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** is given a priority issue in the Eritrean Education system since it is considered as an integral part of the wider educational process. A child who has got an educational opportunity at the early years develops a solid foundation for the primary education. The process becomes more essential because pre-primary education raises the children's social and cultural awareness that would enable them to communicate with the society in a more interactive way, and to have a broad knowledge of their environment. Producing healthy and well-educated citizens starts from the provision of quality education at the pre-primary education level. Thus, every effort will be made to nurture children with appropriate education and to provide them with safe and caring environments in order to bring them up to their full potential.
22. **Universal Basic Education:** The provision of sound basic education is both a human right and a tool that raises the overall awareness of citizens, which in turn enhances productivity. The provision of eight years Basic Education in Eritrea is, therefore, made compulsory to all school-age children. At this level education is free of charge so that all citizens could have free access to it. More importantly, five-year Elementary Education is compulsory for all citizens. In line with this, improving and sustaining the quality of basic education is taken equally important in ensuring higher learning outcomes. At this level, Education will be made all-inclusive and that the government will work towards realising equitable educational opportunities to all citizens irrespective of rural-urban, regional, gender and ethnic differences. up to eight years is compulsory to all school age children. However, all citizens must complete Elementary Education.
23. Normal progression at all levels, especially in Basic Education, will be gradually introduced in order to minimise wastage and improve internal efficiency of the education system. This will provide students with the opportunity to complete their education in accordance with their school age.
24. Continuing education through formal and non-formal channels will be promoted to achieve higher literacy rates and enhanced competence. Adequate *literacy* plays a vital role in lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, good health, active citizenship and the improved quality of life for individuals. Sustainable development cannot be expected without full participation of the population. However, this cannot be met with over 70% of adult population being illiterate. Therefore, the learning needs of adults shall be met through wider access to appropriate learning and life skills development programs. Consequently, the provision of primary education to all adults, and particularly to women is a top priority issue. Furthermore, **Adult and Continuing Education** will be expanded and diversified, and integrated into the mainstream of national education and poverty reduction strategies in order to ensure the participation of all citizens in the socio-economic development of the country.

The provision of integrated, comprehensive and diversified adult education opportunities will allow women to enter, stay and continue their education and training equal with men.

25. The government shall work towards the elimination of **Gender Disparity** at all levels of the education system. Sustainable socio-economic development cannot be realised without the full participation of women, which comprise half of the part of the population. As a result, ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic and secondary education of good quality is one of Eritrea's major education policy. Increasing levels of women's literacy is another crucial factor in promoting girls' education. Therefore, comprehensive efforts will be made at all levels and in all areas to eliminate gender disparities, and to empower women to their full potential to make them self-reliant citizens and active participants in the socio-economic development and welfare of their country.
26. Skilled man power requirements of both the public and private sectors will be met through the provision of an integrated knowledge and skills-based education at the middle and secondary levels, and through the expansion of various Technical and vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres. The new curriculum will integrate knowledge and skill-based education that would facilitate the learner's transition form school to further education and training as well as to the world of work. Science and Technology and ICT will be at the heart of the new curriculum at all levels in order to cope with the rapidly developing technology and swiftly changing society.
27. **Tertiary education** will expand to meet the envisaged high level professionals and skilled manpower requirement to the establishment of modern, strong and economically sustainable Eritrea. Consequently, Tertiary Institutions will maintain international standards so that they will produce the required human capacity in terms of quality and quantity. Moreover, higher institutions will be places in which citizens are equipped with the necessary skills and developments of science and technology and ICT. Furthermore, Tertiary Education will become research centres where high level studies will be conducted for the betterment of the socio-economic status of the country. Life-long learning.

Priority Areas of Focus

28. Eritrean Education system shall provide lifelong learning opportunities to all, focusing on the learner and the learning process. As discussed above, the provision of Basic Education for All is considered a priority issue since it lays the foundation for further learning and for the development of human resources. Moreover, secondary, tertiary and TVET education will be provided to meet the demand of skilled human capacity of the country as well as to develop individuals' critical thinking and creativity. In addressing these issues, the major areas of focus are: improving access and equity; enhancing quality and relevance; building capacity developing sound partnerships.
29. The existing education system has limited access in that the net enrolment ratios for the elementary, middle and secondary school levels stand at 42.7%, 12.3%, and 14.1% respectively; for tertiary education and TVET, it stands at a low of about 4% and 3% respectively. In addition to the limitation in access, repetition rate for the combined elementary, middle and secondary students is as high as 16% per grade. Similarly dropout rate is as high as 15% per grade. The percentage is even higher for girls. This indicates that there is high level of wastage in the education system.

30. Therefore, improving **Access and equity** at all levels - with especial emphasis at the Basic Education level - on the one hand, and introducing **normal progression** in order to reduce repetition and dropout rates on the other hand are taken key priority issue of the education sector. All citizens, irrespective of differences in gender, ethnicity and language, and location, will have equal access to educational opportunities and will have the opportunity to pass grades automatically ones they join the system. With the consideration of individual differences, support will be provided for the needy students.

To this end, the government will:

- Mobilise resources for restructuring and reallocation of government finances towards strengthening the educational system;
- Promote educational investment among all demographic and geographic diversities of the country with due priority to disadvantaged sections;
- Expand the provision of early childhood education to all children of the appropriate age;
- Ensure the equal participation of girls and women in all education programs;
- Provide support for the needy students to ensure normal progression;
- Ensure the provision of Adult and Continuing education, and eliminate adult illiteracy;
- Reduce gender, regional, and rural/urban disparities in educational participation.

31. The current education system is not aligned with the country's development objectives and priorities. The system is highly academic in orientation and intends to prepare students for Tertiary education rather than preparing them for the labour market through diversified curriculum. Higher Education by itself is limited in space as it can only contain only 4% of the actual school age completing high school and only about 20% of all graduates every year. Similarly, the existing Vocational and Technical Schools contains only 3% of the high school enrolment. Consequently, there is about 75% national educational wastage who remain neither unemployed nor unemployable.

32. Therefore, improving the **Quality and Relevance** of Education at all levels is another key priority issue that requires due attention. If education is to perform to the standards that match to the ever-expanding developments in science and technology, the quality and relevance of education provided has to keep abreast with the continuous socio-economic changes. To this effect, curriculum reform becomes crucial. Accordingly, the following measures will be taken:

- Empowering teachers, enhancing their status, motivation and professionalism will be the key ingredient in improving the educational quality of the country;
- Developing a new national curriculum that is appropriate to the learning needs of children and that relates the context of the Eritrean socio-economic needs;
- Improving teacher education and training so that teachers could acquire appropriate teaching methodology that would enhance competence in a participatory approach, and the use of new technologies;
- Encouraging private sector to play an active role in education provision and training;
- Developing adequate teaching and learning materials;
- Consolidating school-based management and monitoring as an effective way of establishing confidence and improving quality.

IV STRATEGIES OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Curriculum Reform

33. The basic changes in the Eritrean education system encompass the structure, the objectives, the curricula and nature and content of the different components of the system at all.
34. **Pre-school education** aims at enhancing the physical intellectual, social and emotional development of children aged 4-5 years. The level of education that children receive in pre-school includes instruction in Reading, Writing, and communication in Mother Tongue and in English together with basic numeracy before they join Grade 1. This is achieved in nursery, kindergarten or home study.

Strategies for pre-school education include:

- Construct sufficient Community Care-Giver centres, and gradually integrate them into the formal education system, and empower the community to assume responsibility;
- Provide adequate learning opportunity to all Pre-school age children by constructing fully furnished schools and providing appropriate resource materials;
- Train and/or recruit qualified teachers and upgrade the qualification of the existing ones;
- Establish a well-organised management system, and establish regulatory framework to improve and encourage private initiative;
- Introduce community nursery day care services for children below four to relief working mothers to fully participate in the economic development of the nation;
- Strengthen Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development intervention;
- Increase government's input in the development of ECD programs.

35. The objective of **Basic Education** (Elementary and Middle) centres around the provision of core knowledge and basic skills that would serve learners to continue further education and/or join the job market.

Strategies for Basic Education include:

- Construct new standard schools based on needs assessment study and consolidate the existing ones;
- Expand boarding schools in order to encourage the participation of girls, nomads, and disadvantaged groups;
- Create alternative route for the out-of-school children/adults to enable them complete Basic Education;
- Train and/or recruit qualified teachers and upgrade the qualification of the existing ones;
- Provide teachers with sufficient training on Modern Technology and ICT as instructional, managerial and research tool;
- Allocate sufficient fund to meet national Basic Education goals;
- Improve the quality of education through continuous monitoring, supervision, and curriculum review;

- Make adequate resource available for the basic-skills courses (including Science and Technology and ICT) and train teachers on the application of Modern Technology
- Ensure normal progression by providing the necessary support to students;
- Develop the required human capacity.

36. **Secondary school education** aims both at preparation for the world of work and the preparation for further education through the provision of core curriculum and enrichment curriculum. The duration of secondary school is four years.

Strategies for secondary education include:

- Construct new standard schools based on needs assessment study and consolidate the existing ones;
- Promote equal participation of girls, disadvantaged groups, people from the remote areas, and nomads by constructing boarding schools;
- Train/recruit well-qualified teachers for the core and enrichment curriculum, and upgrade the qualification of the existing ones;
- Provide teachers with sufficient training on Modern Technology and ICT as instructional, managerial and research tool;
- Develop human capacity to improve the quality of education through continuous monitoring, supervision, and curriculum review;
- Prepare adequate resource materials for the enrichment curriculum courses (including Science and Technology and ICT);
- Develop the required human capacity.

37. Primary, Post-Middle, and Post-Secondary School vocational training programs offer specialised courses for gainful employment or self-employment. The duration of the training may vary from a few months to a couple of years.

Strategies for TVET include:

- Construct vocational training schools for the three levels;
- Upgrade the status of the existing TVET centres;
- Provide relevant training appropriate to the learners needs and responsive to the national priorities;
- Establish inter-sectoral co-ordination on the identification and provision of vocational training opportunities;
- Allocate sufficient fund for the TVET sub-sector;
- Train and/or recruit qualified trainers, and upgrade the qualification of the existing ones;

38. Tertiary level education produces high level human resource and research support needed for economic and socio-cultural development.

Strategies for tertiary education include:

- Upgrade various intermediate TVET schools, Teacher Training Institutes, and the existing colleges to a tertiary level education;
- Establish new and standardised colleges, and universities in various parts of the country.

39. Adult literacy program accomplishes the dual task of providing basic education for those who are unable to go to school and offering access routes to further education or to acquire relevant skills for those who are unable to complete their schooling.

Strategies for Adult Education include:

- Expand and equip Adult Literacy Centres;
 - Organise comprehensive literacy campaign nation-wide to facilitate literacy program;
 - Strengthen Media Education;
 - Provide training for co-ordinators, trainers, and support staff;
 - Train adults in various skills in order to make them active participants in the economic sector.
40. The **teaching method** at all levels aims at strengthening teaching-learning relationships that affirm the active participation of the learner in his/her own learning and development. The approach is explicitly learner-centred system involving activity, investigation and discovery on the part of the students.
41. The **choice of topics** in each level depends upon a variety of influences – national needs, teachers and students in school, time allotment etc. Topics are developed in a spiral manner, so that general concepts repeatedly recur, but with a greater depth each time and in more complex form.
42. The curriculum will be **reviewed** at the end of the 8th year of its implementation. In the mean time, formative evaluation will be carried out in order to enrich and improve it.
43. **Teaching-learning materials** – Textbooks, Teachers’ Guides, Supplementary Reading Materials, Workbooks, Manuals etc. will be prepared and produced locally. For some subjects such as ICT, it may be necessary to buy books from outside the country. Experts will be needed to assist in the preparation and/or customisation of teaching/learning materials.
44. Students' progress will be assessed on a continuous basis. The main objective of assessment is to measure or evaluate if students are performing in line with the curricular objectives. It is a prime concern of the MOE that students should not and need not repeat in classes. School-based **continuous assessment** is expected to ensure normal progression through the provision of support to students.
45. **Standard National Examinations** will be given at the end of elementary and middle school. The examinations will not only serve for certification and selection into the next higher level but also for monitoring the standard and quality of the education. Secondary school students will take Eritrean Secondary Education Certificate Examination (ESECE) at the end of Grade 12 in order to maintain standard of education and to transfer credit for admission to higher education.
46. The **National Educational Accreditation and Evaluation Unit** will co-ordinate the National Examinations. This body will have close link with the office of the Minister of the MOE, but is an independent body answerable only to a board that oversees its activities.

Language and Education

47. The language of instruction at pre-school and elementary levels will be the child's mother tongue. In multi-ethnic/multi-lingual school environments, the medium of instruction would be the language of the majority of residents of the particular area where the school is situated. The medium of instruction for the Middle School level and above is English for all schools that adhere to the standards set by the MOE.
48. English will be taught as a subject at all levels and mother tongue will be given as a subject at middle level. More emphasis will be given to the development of English language. Other international languages will be offered at Middle and Secondary levels whenever available resources permit and if enough students indicate interest in the language.
49. The language of training for Elementary School teachers will be both English and the trainees' mother tongue, as they will be teaching in mother tongue. For Middle and Secondary School teachers, English will be the language of training.

Institutional Capacity Development

50. The country's infrastructure in general and its education system in particular were terribly affected by the decades of war for liberation. The educational infrastructure was also virtually paralysed. As a result, not only has there been an acute shortage of trained personnel in the system, but also the existing ones lack the right kind of knowledge and managerial skills to hold responsibility. This inadequacy has invariably affected the quality of education in the country. As a result, it is vital to develop the institutional capacity of the whole system to the full potential. The following strategies would be pursued to develop **effective managerial capacity, capable teaching force, appropriate infrastructure and resources**.

Strategies for the development of effective managerial capacity include:

- Develop the managerial capacity of the existing staff and make preparation for more professionally trained ones with structuring and reforming the capacity development policy dimension;
- Introduce and strengthen EMIS;
- Ensure the participation and support of all stakeholders in the area of Capacity Development;
- Upgrade the monitoring capability of local education officers.

Teacher Training and Education

51. A key determinant of student achievement is the quality of teaching. Advancement in education depends largely on the qualification and ability of the teaching staff in general and on the human pedagogical and technical qualities of the individual teachers. The provision of quality and relevant education and training cannot be realised without adequate supply of highly motivated and well-trained teachers.

Strategies for quality teacher education and training include:

- Establish **Teacher Education Institutions** aimed at producing and meeting the demand for teaching-force and other human capacity needs in terms of quality and quantity;
- Improve the academic and pedagogical preparation of teachers;

- Provide Pre-service Training Programs, and upgrade the existing teachers through In-service programs;
 - Introduce appropriate recruitment and placement mechanisms and establish modern teacher administration procedures;
 - Introduce career and salary progression ladder and other incentives to strengthen teachers' motivation and professional commitment;
 - Formation of Teacher Associations and/or core groups to foster capabilities in teaching, research, experience sharing, curriculum development, etc.
52. Raising the minimum qualification of teachers is a basic strategy at this level. The following standards would be adapted for teacher qualification and deployment:
- Pre-school teachers should be Diploma Graduates (2-3 years of College level education) in fields of study relevant to ECD;
 - Elementary and Middle school teachers should at least be Diploma Graduates (2-3 years of College level education). Teachers at this level will have to specialise in broad field of studies such as: Natural Science or Social Science or Language etc.;
 - Secondary school teachers should have a minimum of Bachelors Degree; and will have to specialise in a particular field of study as their major, and take adequate courses in pedagogy courses;
 - Teachers for the tertiary level education should have a minimum of Masters Degree; and will have to specialise in a particular field of study as their major, and take some Pedagogy courses;
 - Directors for the elementary and middle levels should have Bachelor Degree; and Supervisors for these levels should have Bachelor Degree or higher diploma;
 - Directors and supervisors for the secondary level should have Masters Degree;
 - Zoba managers should have Masters Degree; and will have to specialise in Educational Management and Planning as their major.

Physical Infrastructure

53. The commitment to provide every citizen equal access to educational opportunities requires creating environment within which all people can learn. This demands huge amount in human and material investment. It is with this consideration that the following strategies are set.

Strategies for the improvement and expansion of infrastructure include:

- Develop effective and realistic planning;
- Establish low-cost and durable infrastructure;
- Apply modern school mapping and GIS for effective planning;
- Encourage development partners for technical and financial support.

Decentralization in Education Management

54. Decentralisation of educational governance and management is one of the key strategies for the development of effective efficient and viable educational system. In the Eritrean context, decentralization as a mechanism has been operational since the proclamation of Decree No. 86 in 1996. Since then, realistic measures in institutional strengthening and planning have been taken and educational management has moved gradually away from the central

planning system. In this respect, the MOE focuses on the following functional responsibilities:

- Formulating education policies and strategies and delineating education sector development plan and programs;
- Issuing regulations and standards and monitoring their implementation;
- Conducting sector based research studies;
- Developing human resources;
- Empower the community to hold responsibility and develop sense of ownership.

55. Regional and sub-regional management has the responsibility to perform the operational activities that include planning, budgeting, performance reporting system, monitoring quality and effectiveness.

Strategies for decentralization of educational management include:

- Develop the capacity of regional and sub-regional management sector;
- Encourage the formation of Parents and Teachers Association (PTA);
- Empower the community in the management of schools to cultivate ownership and partnership;
- Introduce funding system where planning would focus on well developed, transparent, accountable, and intelligible issues to ensure an equitable allocation of resources;
- Strengthen and improve the expansion of EMIS;
- Encourage private sector initiative.

Science and Technology

56. The introduction of Science and technology in the education sector would enable Eritrea to move towards knowledge-based economy, and to catch up with the rapid development in Science and Technology.

Strategies for the introduction of Science and Technology include:

- Expose educational managers, teachers and students to modern methods and processes;
- Introduce ICT as instructional, management, and research tool in order to promote creativity, independent learning, and innovative thinking in the student population;
- Provide adequate resources for the promotion of science and technology;
- Train and retrain teachers and other educators so as to equip them with knowledge and skills that enables them to cope with the ever changing technology;
- Encourage the use of modern technology by providing schools with facilities and equipment;
- Make the curriculum reform sensitive and responsive to modern changes;
- Promote **Media education to strengthen** educational delivery in the non-formal and formal channels;
- Introduce Low-cost, easy to maintain ICT tools in schools;
- Strengthen collaboration with development partners to provide the means in order to meet the heavy capital investment that ICT requires, and encourage private initiative.

Financing Education

57. With a low per capita income and widespread poverty, Eritrea's ability to mobilise sufficient domestic funds to finance the provision of learning opportunity to all citizens is limited. The

participation of various groups to broaden financial resources for education becomes imperative. To this end, the government, the community and the direct beneficiaries will be made to contribute varying amounts towards financing educational costs. This will remain the governing strategy in Financing Education that includes the following main strategies:

Strategies for financing education includes:

- Increase Government's expenditure on education;
- Introduce cost sharing and/or cost recovery/taxation schemes;
- Create co-ordinated partnership with development partners;
- Strengthen decentralisation;
- Encourage private sector investment on schools;
- Establish Education Act;
- Empower the community to develop responsibility in financing education.

Inter-sectoral Co-ordination

58. Human resources development is a shared responsibility. Therefore, its development becomes more meaningful in the context of an appropriate synchronisation between the government, the community, development partners, the private sector, and other inter-sectoral program interventions. More highlighted in this engagement is the determining role of the community in education development.

Strategies for inter-sectoral co-ordination includes:

- Strengthen stronger community partnership in order to make the community assume responsibility and ownership of school management;
- Create Inter-sectoral co-ordinating taskforce that would identify the educational needs and opportunities among the various sectors, and to work towards its effective and integrated implementation. Educational values of the Adult basic education and training in rural areas, and ECD programs will be synchronised with relevant skills offered with the collaboration of line ministries, NGOs, and other sectors;
- Strengthen the level and scope of collaboration in program development and implementation between MoE and the relevant social and sectoral institutions to facilitate the overall human resources and economic development.

59. A genuine **Partnership** with Development Agencies, stakeholders, communities, NGO's, the private sector, and others is crucial to develop sustainable funding system and to strengthen sector-wide educational management in more integrated form. This would also mean sharing of experiences which enhances the provision of quality education. Within this context, more co-ordinated relationship will be created with development partners based on the following three governing policies:

- **Ownership:** Government holds ownership of education because education is a national concern; a major force for nation building, social change and individual development. In this regard, government will be responsible for identifying national educational needs and priorities and for the allocation of sufficient resources for its implementation;
- **Transparency:** The government and the development partners will be transparent in all educational activities. Transparent evaluation procedures and experience sharing will be part of this principle;

- **Accountability:** Development Partners will show commitment and the government will be accountable for the implementation of the jointly agreed projects.

Cross-cutting Issues

60. **HIV/Aids** is one of the greatest barriers to achieving educational objectives and other development initiatives since it is a potential danger to the teaching force and the youth.

Strategies to minimise the effects of HIV/AIDS on education include:

- Include Health Education in the new curriculum in order to raise the awareness of the consequences of this fatal disease in the youth, its impact on the productive human power and poverty;
- Introduce HIV/AIDS clubs in schools.

61. Sustainable development cannot be realised without the full and equal participation of all social groups.

Strategies for the implementation of the educational issues that require special attention include:

- **Education of girls** in the educational reform will be given due attention in order to make them fully functioning partners in the society, and to enable them take their place as equal partners with their male counterparts;
- **Socially disadvantaged groups** - physically disabled, nomads, semi-nomads, rural areas, etc. - will have equal educational opportunity.