Statement of the Middle East Network on Innovation in Teaching and Learning (MENIT)

With regards to the objectives of Education for All in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals post-2015

Since the 1960s until today, the Middle East region has witnessed a qualitative leap forward in education. School enrolment has increased to 94% by 2010 and the access to education for girls has improved significantly. In addition, there are good indicators of the commitment of governments to invest in public education. According to the World Bank, public expenditures on education in the Middle East are the highest of all developing regions.

Despite these achievements, studies and figures show weaknesses in the quality of education. Furthermore, there is still a great gap between the skills of the graduates of different educational institutions and the job-relevant skills the labour market actually requires. This is reinforced by few possibilities to obtain vocational training.

This is where the Middle East Network on Innovative Teaching and Learning (MENIT) comes in, a regional platform that brings together more than 300 experts and practitioners in the field of teaching and learning in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories. MENIT aims at facilitating regional educational dialogue, and encourages experts to exchange information on innovative practices and the implementation of joint research projects. It seeks to enhance their ability to influence educational regional and local trends, as well as to strengthen their efforts in improving the quality of education, in order to adjust the learning outcomes in Middle East educational institutions to the needs of learners in the 21st century.

MENIT is based on individual and voluntary efforts, and operates independently without any governmental or party affiliation. The network is managed by an elected Steering Committee.

MENIT is currently implemented by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) under the supervision of the Open Regional Fund for the Middle East and North Africa (ORF-MENA) in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian Territories. The network's slogan is: "Innovate...Connect...Share!". It is worth mentioning that MENIT is a member of the Arab Campaign for Education for All and The Regional Initiative to Promote Adult Education.

By hosting a series of meetings, individual and group consultations across the region, MENIT members developed a statement about features and aims of Education for All in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals post-2015. The following points are emphasised:
1. Providing fair and free educational opportunities which guarantee the right to equal, qualitative and inclusive education for all, regardless of their abilities, needs and circumstances.

2. Promoting gender equality and the values of democratic citizenship through education which are the basis for civil societies to respect pluralism and diversity.

3. Providing inclusive education for lifelong learners to meet their needs and the needs of their communities.

4. Promoting innovative teaching methods appropriate to 21st century education that develops the learners’ life skills, especially critical thinking, dialogue and leadership skills, creativity, active citizenship and innovation.

5. Developing teachers' competencies, improving their professional and living conditions and enhancing their roles in educational reform policies.

6. Securing the right to education and ensuring quality education in emergencies, especially in areas of armed conflicts.

7. Enhancing institutional capacities, developing legislative frameworks and strategic plans, as well as providing adequate budgets that are necessary to achieve quality education.

8. Adopting the concept of international institutions calling for an allocation of 6% of the national income, and an allocation of 16-20% of the government budgets for education.

9. Directing education to serve the economic, social, cultural and political development, and embed it in the post-2015 developmental goals.

10. Strengthening the participation of civil society in drawing up visions of community-based education, education policies, and monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes.

11. Integrating persons with disabilities in employment and education, including their issues in media policies in the context of a human rights perspective, and promoting their active and productive participation in social, cultural, economic, political and +other aspects of life.