

Keeping Our Promises on Education
High-Level Event on Development Cooperation in Education
Brussels, 2 May 2007

Talking points Mr. Erik Solheim, Minister for Development Cooperation, Norway

- **Norway welcomes this conference and commends the EU commission and the World Bank for organising this event. I would particularly praise Chancellor Brown for his strong engagement and enthusiasm for education. Norway supports his vision on the importance of long term predictability in financing.**
- **Norway is committed to keeping our promises on education, to stick to our commitments to Education for All. Norway will continue to be a strong partner in the Fast Track Initiative and other global initiatives. I now call on all countries, and in particular on the G8 countries, to speed up disbursement to the Fast Track Initiative.**
- **In order to ensure long-term planning and predictable financing, Norway is moving in the direction of more long term budget support in our partner countries. It is important that donor support to education is included in the national planning and policy framework.**
- **I would like to highlight the importance of providing education to girls. In Norway girls are now performing better than boys in all subjects except in sports. This shows that it is possible to make progress in girl's education.**
- **There is a strong relationship between support to higher education and primary education. Without higher education we will not be able to provide teachers. Without teacher training and qualified teachers we will not be able to reach the Education for All goals.**
- **Education is essential for peace and reconciliation. From my own experience from the peace process in Sri Lanka, I have been struck by the ability to continue providing support to education by the parties in the conflict. I agree with the representative from Save the Children that we should substantially increase our support to education in countries in conflict.**
- **Financing and resource mobilisation for education is important. However we must also emphasise quality and inclusion of all children**

in the process. Norway is now focusing our efforts on how we can reach the most vulnerable groups of children. This includes child labourers, children in fragile states, Aids orphans and children with disability.

- **This year marks 10 years since the Oslo Conference on Child Labour. Although there has been some progress, children being kept away from school because they have to work is still a serious problem in many countries. There has so far not been enough focus on child labour in the EFA/FTI process. We must now put this issue on the agenda.**
- **From the background material to this meeting I read that one third of our assistance to education is spent on technical assistance. This is not satisfactory. Our support to education should go to the sector programs and not to consultants from the donor countries.**
- **Reaching the MDG and EFA goals depends on a strong and efficient multilateral system. All relevant organisations and institutions must contribute in a common effort. We need to see this in the perspective of UN reform. We need to strengthen the Education For All - High Level Group process. I encourage the 5 convening EFA organisations; UNESCO, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA to strengthen their cooperation in a joint effort to make this a more relevant and efficient forum. Norway is willing to host a future High Level group meeting if this can contribute to this development.**
- **Today we have heard that we are the first generation in history that has the opportunity to reach the goal of Education for All. The critical factor to do this is political will. We must show this political will. As we were amply reminded by the student from India this morning – We do not need more words – what we need is action.**