



Press Release

For immediate release

High-level Education Conference, Brussels, 2nd of May, 2007

Brussels, 2 May 2007 – Rich country donors, international organizations and civil society leaders underlined today the urgent need for donors to deliver on their promises to educate all the world's children by 2015 and announced a number of new funding commitments.

Louis Michel, Gordon Brown and Paul Wolfowitz today convened a high-level conference in Brussels in order to accelerate progress towards the education Millennium Development Goal (MDG) that all children complete primary education by 2015. The conference heard of significant progress by developing countries in preparing ten-year plans to achieve universal primary education.

New funding was announced by the European Commission committing an estimated 1.7 billion Euros to Education from the 10th European Development Fund (2008 – 2013) and from the EC budget. In addition, the EC commits 22 Million Euro for the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI). Within the context of the 2006 promise by the United Kingdom to spend 11.2 billion Euros (15 billion USD) to the Education for All goals, it announced 740 million Euros in support of Ethiopia's and Tanzania's 10-year Education plans. The World Bank announced its investment of 1.12 billion Euros (1.5 billion USD) in 2007, which will continue into 2008 in Education plans in the 68 poorest countries in the world – an increase of 50% compared to the annual level of the past five years. Germany announced an extra 8 Million Euros to EFA FTI, with Japan adding a further 1.8 Million Euros (2.4 Million USD). New donors such as the Soros Foundation promised an investment of 3.7 Million Euros (5 Million USD) in support of Liberia's Education plans conditional on other donors' commitments.

Several donors emphasised the need for long-term, predictable funding. The European Commission announced the introduction of a new form of budget support aimed specifically at supporting education and other MDGs.

A significant group of private sector representatives (including Cisco Systems, Intel, Microsoft and AMD) also announced that they would work through the World Economic Forum's Partnership for Education in support of country education plans. Their investment in global education marks an important step forward and reflects the importance of education to future economic growth and prosperity.

All participants agreed that urgent action is needed now: 77 million children are out of school today - including 44 million girls. At the current rate of progress at least 75 countries, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, will not achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015.

There has been strong progress from developing countries in developing sound long-term education plans. Since the commitment to action made at the Financing for Development conference in Abuja in May 2006, 15 African countries have completed 10 year plans, 14 of these have plans endorsed by the 'Education for All' Fast Track Initiative.

Today's conference followed on from the Special Ministerial Roundtable on Education in Singapore on 17 September 2006. Ministers and delegates in Brussels looked forward to future opportunities to take stock of further progress, including the Financing for Development conference in Accra and the FTI Technical Group meeting in Bonn later this month, and – later in the year – the G8 Summit, the UNESCO High Level Meeting and the EU-Africa Summit.

In addition to the three co-convenors, conference participants included high-level government participation from Bahrain, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Netherlands, Portugal, UK, Ghana, Mozambique, Madagascar, Niger. Other participants included George Soros, civil society organizations and the private sector, including representatives from Save the Children, the Global Campaign for Education and the World Economic Forum.

Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio

Angela Bekkers

Vickie Sheriff

European Commission
Tel: +32 2 295.26.58

World Bank Brussels
Tel : +32 2 5520039

DFID
+44 (0)7768 921383
+44 (0) 207 023 0600

mamadeu.altafaj-tardio@ec.europa.eu

abekkers@worldbank.org

mv-sheriff@dfid.gov.uk