

# *Education for All – Fast Track Initiative*

## **Accelerating progress towards quality universal primary education**

June 18, 2007

Secretariat of the Committee  
on Economic Development and Cooperation  
German Bundestag  
Attn: Mr. Thilo Hoppe

**Dear Herr Hoppe,**

Thank you for the invitation to speak at the expert hearing of the German Bundestag's Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development as part of the discussion on 'Education in Developing Countries' on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June. I will be most happy to accept the invitation and I am grateful for the opportunity to explain the Education for All - *Fast Track Initiative* (FTI) to the Honourable Members of the Committee.

I have attached a written response to the questions about the FTI which you forwarded to me on behalf of your members. I am also enclosing additional background information on the FTI which may be of interest either before or after our discussion on Wednesday. I will prepare a short presentation for the meeting and I will of course be very happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

### **The Education for All – *Fast Track Initiative***

The Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) was launched in 2002 as a global partnership between donor and developing countries to ensure accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. All low-income countries that are committed to achieving universal primary completion can receive support from FTI. The FTI is supported by all of the major donor countries and multilateral agencies working in the education sector<sup>1</sup>. As at the end of May 2007, a total of thirty one developing countries had been endorsed as full FTI partner countries.

It is expected that up to 60 countries could join the FTI Partnership by the end of 2008. However, successful expansion of FTI will require greater financial commitments by donors and greater action toward reform by recipient nations.

Germany is currently the Co-Chair of the FTI Steering Committee and the recent G8 meeting re-stated the support of the world's largest economies to supporting education plans in FTI countries.

FTI is built on mutual commitments. Developing countries are asked to prepare sound, credible education sector plans which include national budget commitments and which put primary education at the forefront of their domestic efforts. Donor countries are asked to provide increased, long-term financial and technical support in a transparent and predictable manner and to provide this in a harmonized and coordinated way in support of a single national sector plan.

In addition to mobilizing additional financial resources, the FTI also aims to help governments to:


- Build local capacity to implement the education sector plans;
- Collect better data to inform their policies and to monitor progress in the education sector;
- Develop better policies to address the special challenges of the education sector in their countries, including the particular needs of reaching excluded communities; reducing the gap between the numbers of boys and girls completing their schooling; and dealing with the impact of HIV/AIDs on the education system.

The FTI aims to mobilize additional finances through national budgets as well as external support for the education sector through bilateral and multilateral agencies working in FTI countries. The FTI also provides direct support through two multi-donor trust funds managed by the World Bank. The **FTI Catalytic Fund** has total pledges of \$1.2 billion (2003-2009) and supports financing needs in education sector plans which have a continuing gap after other sources of financing have been exhausted. The 15 donors that currently support the Catalytic Fund are: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Germany announced an additional 8 million euros to support the Catalytic Fund at the Brussels High Level Meeting on Education in May.

The **FTI Education Program Development Fund (EPDF)** is designed to provide additional technical assistance and support for activities to build capacity and share knowledge among FTI countries. This fund currently has a total of \$82 million in pledges (2005-2009). The donors supporting the EPDF are: Canada, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

You will find more detailed information about FTI in the attached written responses and background materials. I will be happy to respond to any further questions you and the honourable members of the Committee might have during our meeting on June 20, 2007.

Sincerely,



Desmond Bermingham  
Head of the FTI Secretariat

<sup>1</sup> More than 30 bilateral, regional and international agencies and development banks are currently active members of the FTI Partnership. This includes: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and USA. The multilateral agencies include: AfDB, ADB, IADB, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank. The coalition of education NGOs in the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) also supports FTI and is a member of the Steering Committee.