

EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FUND (EPDF) STRATEGY

COMMITTEE MEETING

BONN, May 22, 2007

MINUTES

- 1. Participating members:** A meeting of the Education Program Development Fund Strategy Committee (EPDF SC) was convened in Bonn, Germany on May 22, 2007. It was chaired by Ruth Kagia, Director of Education, World Bank. Members of the EPDF SC in attendance were: Nora Fyles, Tanya Mc Gregor (Canada); Maire Matthews, Keith Gristock (Ireland); Ronald Siebes, Rebekka van Roemburg, (Netherlands); Olav Seim (Norway); Kaviraj Appadu, (Sweden); Noriko Matsuda (Japan) Peter Troy (UK); Alain Dhersigny, Jacques Malpel (France). Participants from the FTI Secretariat were Robert Prouty, Kouassi Soman, Luc Gacougnolle, Palak Mehra, Angela Bekkers, Chantal Rigaud and Michelle Mesen.
- 2. Observers included:** Khawla Shaheen (UNESCO); Dina Craissati, Cream Wright (UNICEF); Temby Caprio, Cornelia Batchi (Germany); Christopher Thomas, Jee-Peng Tan, Regina Bendokat, Robin Horn, Manorama Gotur (World Bank).
- 3. A background paper** titled EPDF Interim Progress Report, Bonn (Germany); May 2007 (including its Annex 2: EPDF Task Force – Report and Recommendations; March 8-9, 2007; Oslo, Norway) had been circulated to members of the Committee before the meeting.
- 4. Summary of progress:** Robert Prouty, Deputy Head of the FTI Secretariat, presented a summary of progress based on the May 2007 Status Report. He highlighted the following points.
- 5. Strong implementation progress over the past six months.** The EPDF has become an important funding source for helping countries to prepare their national ESPs; improving capacity; strengthening donor partnerships at the country level and commissioning innovative studies and research. Initially, there were a few implementation delays as systems were being set-up and tested; and the Regional Advisory Groups were being established. Moreover, the Africa Region which accounts for half of EPDF-funded activities did not come on board until 2006. Since Cairo, the rate of execution and disbursement has accelerated considerably.
- 6. Fund financial status.** Over the period 2005-06, donors pledged and paid US\$52.3 million to the EPDF trust fund. Of that amount, US\$24.7 million (47 percent) has been allocated to the six regions for programs and activities expected to be completed by end-2007; the cash balance of US\$27.6 million has yet to be allocated. Of the amount allocated to regions, US\$15.4 million (62 percent) has been committed; and US\$7.8 million (31 percent) has been disbursed to date. These financial ratios have tripled since last November 2006; and they reflect positively on the strong performance of all regions in carrying out their planned activities. However this will require continued close monitoring to ensure that structural barriers to faster disbursements are removed.
- 7. Future donor pledges.** Since December 2006, France and Japan have joined as EPDF donors; bringing the total number of donor countries to ten. These ten donor countries have pledged a total of US\$30.2 million for the period 2007-09. This amount adds to the cash balance available to date of US\$27.6 million for a cumulative balance of US\$57.7 million going forward.
- 8. Regional implementation progress and results.** World Bank Regional Sector Managers from the East Asia and Pacific Region (EAP) and the Africa Region highlighted progress and results.

9. **The EAP Region** received a total of US\$2.4 million; of which 84% has been committed. The EPDF has supported various activities to bring governments and EFA-FTI partners together; especially in Mongolia, Timor Leste, Cambodia, and China. The fund has been very productive, is flexible and simple to use, and has attracted other funding, from Japan and the Netherlands. Some of the activities undertaken by the EPDF in EAP include (see more details in the Interim Progress Report):

- EPDF supported the EMIS Stocktaking and Diagnostic Study in LAO PDR. The study provided detailed EMIS improvement recommendations to MOE in the areas of strategy, organization, policy mandate, human resources, cultural change, and data collection instruments, with a newly designed annual school census form and a costed 3-year work plan.
- In Cambodia Scholarship/school effectiveness study sponsored by the EPDF enriched the government understanding of how scholarship program works; and helped shape the design and delivery of the Cambodia Education Sector Support scholarship program.
- EPDF co-sponsored East Asia and Pacific Regional Workshop on using Monitoring and Evaluation for Better Education Policy, Planning and Results in Bali, Indonesia.

10. **Request for bridge funding.** In order to sustain progress in the next few months before the EPDF SC makes funding decisions for 2008 activities, the EAP region requested a bridge funding from the Committee. These funds will be used for a follow up workshop to the one held in Bali, Indonesia. Other activities will include a teachers' workshop in Beijing and technical assistance to Cambodia for preparation for implementation of the FTI Catalytic Fund grant. Requests for post-basic work were reported to be increasing, given the influx of children coming out of primary schools. Overall, the Strategy Committee requested that the Bank clarify the planning/approval/reporting cycle for the EPDF, and to ensure that the Regional Advisory Groups were able to work within this cycle.

11. **The Africa Region** is EPDF's largest recipient with over 45 programs and activities. Some 33 countries in the region have expressed interest in receiving assistance to develop their ESPs. This year, EPDF has assisted thirteen countries initiate or finalize their ESPs, including: Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Sao Tome & Principe, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Tanzania. Of those, four are fragile states: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Burundi.

- EPDF funds have also been earmarked for future collaborations with partner groups like the Association for the Development of Education in Africa and Pole de Dakar.
- Furthermore, EPDF will be co-sponsoring two Leadership Capacity Development workshops in South Africa in July 2007 and October 2007 to facilitate cross country learning.
- The Africa region has also launched a Monitoring and Evaluation Program for 11 interested countries in collaboration with the MIT Poverty Action lab.
- Lastly, the Africa region highlighted the need to integrate better IDA and FTI operations so as to strengthen their synergies and complementarity. In so doing, special attention should be paid to staff incentives in terms of outputs/results visibility and recognition by line managers.

12. **EPDF Task Force Discussions:** Olav Seim (Chair of the EPDF Task Force) gave a brief overview of the Task Force's work and discussions. This Task Force was created at the 2006 Partnership Meeting in Cairo; and it met in Oslo (Norway) from March 8-9, 2007. The ten member team discussed the opportunities and challenges in broadening technical and analytical support for national teams, knowledge generation, and knowledge-sharing and policy dialogue. Four main issues were discussed: (i) recipient-executed approach vs. Bank executed approach at the country level; (ii)

better collaboration with other partners; (iii) responsive support for “Thematic Work”; and (iv) synergies with other existing Task Forces.

13. **Fragile states task team meeting.** Peter Troy of DFID provided a summary of the Fragile States task team meeting the previous day. At that meeting, participants reached a broad consensus on the need for a pre endorsement funding modality for Fragile States.

14. **Summary of Committee decisions.** On key issues and recommendations put forth by the EPDF task force, the Committee made the following decisions:

1. **Creation of a Central thematic window:** A four-person task force was set up to work on this issue. The group will make proposals on the mechanism for supporting thematic work that is global or multi regional in nature. The questions that need to be addressed are: How would it work? How would it fit in with on-going regional initiatives? What type of activities would be funded? And how to ensure complementarity? It was noted that proposals for these activities would need to be very clearly articulated, as a basis for fund allocations, including as to why EPDF funding was appropriate. The task force is headed by Christopher Thomas – Sector Manager, Education East Asia and the Pacific, World Bank. Other members of the task force are Kaviraj Appadu, Senior Program Officer SIDA, Khwala Shaheen, Senior Program Specialist, ED/EFA/CT UNESCO; and Robert Prouty Deputy Head FTI Secretariat. The group will prepare recommendations by end July of 2007.
2. **Support for Fragile States:** In line with the recommendations of the fragile states task team (see paragraph 13 above), it was recommended that a concrete proposal be developed to strengthen linkages between FTI and the Program for Fragile States managed by UNICEF with financial support from the Netherlands. It was agreed that linkages with the Fragile States task force would be presented for further discussion in the Technical Meeting.
3. **Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the EPDF:** A four-person task force was set up to help shift EPDF monitoring from an activities-driven exercise to a more systematic monitoring and evaluation against an established results framework for the EPDF. The task force would address the following questions: How do we evaluate the EPDF? What should be the indicators? When should the evaluation take place? The task force is headed by Maire Matthews, Education Advisor, Irish Aid. Other members of the task force are Nora Fyles, Director, CIDA; Michelle Riboud, Sector Manager South Asia Region, World Bank; and Luc Gacougnolle, Education Planner, FTI Secretariat. An external review of the EPDF-funded activities expected to be conducted next year. The task team led by Ireland should produce a draft report by the end of July 2007.
4. **Post Basic Education Window:** A number of donors funding post primary through bilateral channels expressed interest in pooling together under the FTI umbrella so as to enhance coherence within sector programs and reduce fragmentation. It was recognized that explicitly opening up the EPDF for post-basic education or creating a “Post basic window” will have major implications for FTI as a whole; hence the Committee proposed that the issue be brought to the table at the Technical Meeting.
5. **Bridge funding request for EAP:** The request was approved for US\$500,000.

Cleared with and cc: Ruth Kagia, Chair; and EPDF Strategy Committee Members.