



## Press Release

### For immediate release

### **High-level Education Conference, Brussels, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1.7 billion Euros to Education from the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (2007 – 2010) 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.

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## Education – frequently asked questions and answers

### 1) How many children are out of school today?

Around the world there are still over 77 million children out of school, including 44 million girls. This number is still high, but there has been significant progress over the past years: in the year 2000 there were 100 million children out of school. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of countries that have achieved universal primary completion increased from 37 to 52 and primary completion worldwide (the percentage of children finishing grade 6 of primary school compared to their age group) increased from 78% to 83%.

### 2) How many children are out of school in (Sub-Saharan) Africa?

Africa is the region where most children are out of school today: 38 million in total. Still, there is also significant progress in Africa: six African countries have increased primary completion by over 10 percent a year since 2000.

The region with the second largest group with out-of-school children is South and West Asia: 16 million children do not go to school. Four countries are home to the largest numbers of out of school children - India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ethiopia (22.8 million out of school children)

### 3) How many children complete primary school?

Although every year more children are enrolling into primary school, 83% of the relevant age group completes their basic education. In Africa, only 62% of the children completes grade 6 of primary school.

### 4) How much development aid is spent on basic education?

In 2005, a total of 3.8 billion USD was spent on basic education in developing countries, of which 2.4 billion USD went to the 68 poorest countries in the world<sup>1</sup>. This is a decrease of 27% compared to 2004, when 5.2 billion USD was dedicated to basic education (of which 4 billion USD for low-income countries).

### 5) How much money is needed to get all children into school and reach universal primary education before 2015?

The financing needs to reach universal primary education are large. In Africa alone, 1.6 million teachers need to be hired to reach this goal. Worldwide estimates indicate that it would cost US\$ 9 to 10 billion of external donor financing to reach universal primary education by 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> Unesco / Nicholas Burnett, Education Global Monitoring Report 2007



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