

Open Letter from African Heads of State to Government Leaders in Donor Countries in Support of 1Goal Education for All

Dear Excellencies,

As the whole world will unite around this year's greatest sporting event, we feel the excitement, energy and joy on the African continent. Football is a common language in Africa; it is our passion, our culture, and our youth.

And it is because of our youth that we, African Heads of State, wish to harness the power of football today to ensure that educating Africa's children will be the legacy of the 2010 FIFA World Cup tomorrow.

This weekend, just before the finals on July 11 in Soccer City, we hope you will support the 1Goal Education for All Summit in South Africa. The summit will focus on scaling up resources for education in Africa overall and how it provides the basis for achieving all other Millennium Development Goals. Education has proved it can reduce poverty, dramatically lower maternal and child deaths, and create an overall healthier and more skilled population. Recognizing this, most of our governments have significantly stepped up funding for education. But external aid for basic education in low-income countries is faltering and risks undermining the impressive gains that have been made over the past ten years.

A key ally in our efforts to educate our boys and girls is the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI). The EFA FTI has already provided around US\$1.5 billion to support education in 24 African countries. It has helped enroll 19 million more children in school in these countries. Girls account for a remarkable 62% of new entrants. It has helped train more than 300,000 teachers, construct 28,000 classrooms, and distribute 200 million text books. And it has done all this while promoting the highest levels of aid harmonization and effectiveness.

Increasing support to FTI will help to reach the 72 million children around the world—about half in Sub-Saharan Africa—who still do not go to school. This year and beyond, FTI aims to support us to substantially reduce the remaining number of children out of school and help them complete their primary education.

During this sporting event that has captured the world's attention, we appeal to you as government leaders of donor countries to help focus attention on this challenge. We commit to increasing domestic resources for achieving Education for All; by the time we meet again in September 2010 at the Millennium Development Summit in New York, we look forward to new commitments from donor countries as well, in order to provide a level playing field for all children everywhere.

With our sincere regards,

Mr. Thomas Yayi Boni
President of the Republic of Benin

Mr. Blaise Compaoré
President of Burkina Faso

Mr. François Bozizé Yangouvonda
President of the Central African Republic

Mr. Yahya Jammeh
President of the Republic of The Gambia

Mr. John Evans Atta Mills
President of the Republic of Ghana

Mr. Pakalitha Mosisili
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho

Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
President of the Islamic Republic of
Mauritania

Mr. Armando Emilio Guebuza
President of the Republic of Mozambique

Mr. Salou Djibo
President of the Republic of Niger

Mr. Paul Kagame
President of the Republic of Rwanda

Mr. Abdoulaye Wade
President of the Republic of Senegal

Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

Mr. Faure Gnassingbé
President of the Republic of Togo