



Press Release

USD120 million funding for Nepal's "Education for All Fast Track Initiative"

Kathmandu, Nepal, November 27th, 2009: The Education for All Fast Track Initiative announced at its donor meeting in Rome, Italy on 5 November 2009 that USD120 million will be provided to support the Nepal Government to implement the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP).

The Fast Track Initiative is global partnerships to assist low-income countries meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for education, as well as the Education For all goal that all children are able to complete a full cycle of primary education by 2015. The grant to support Nepal's SSRP comes from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund, a multilateral fund sponsored by 18 donors. This fund helps countries with partner-endorsed national education strategies scale-up their existing programmes.

The new funding will support Nepal to implement the School Sector Reform Plan over the next three years. The national plan aims to integrate most in-need children into the school system, particularly girls and children from marginalised groups. It also focuses on improving the quality of education and strengthening the institutionalized capacity at central and local level.

Under the SSRP, school cycles will be reformed to include Basic (covering Grades 1-8) and Secondary schooling (covering Grades 9-12). The Plan also commits to providing free (Grade 1-8) and compulsory (Grade 1-5) education for all children.

The projected cost of the MOE's School Sector Reform Plan is US\$ 2,626 million for five years. The financial contribution from FTI will be disbursed in stages between 2010 and 2012, adding to the existing nine Development Partners estimated share of US\$500 million. The contribution from FTI will help bridge the SSRP funding gap of US \$228 million to enable full implementation of the five years' education sector plan.

Nepal has made considerable progress towards achieving the MDGs for education. The net enrolment rate for primary education has increased from 68% in 1995 to 92% in 2009. The increase can be attributed to expansion of programmes to under-served areas, enrolment drives, and the provision of special scholarships for ethnic minority groups and girls. The Net Enrolment Rate for girls is 90.4%, and there is a gender parity index of 0.98 at primary level and 0.92 at secondary level. The government estimates, however, that 266,000 children still fail to attend school, the majority of whom are girls.

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