

Global Partnership for Education Replenishment Pledging Conference, June 26, 2015, Brussels

## European Commission pledge

The GPE is **a partnership**. As such it is for all partners to pledge increased domestic and external funding and policy commitments for education. All of us – partner countries, donors, international organisations, civil society, the private sector and foundations – have a part to play in making the GPE work. We all have an interest in helping forge a stronger Partnership that builds on the comparative advantage of each partner and the shared responsibility of all to achieve results.

Education is a priority for the European Commission. To reflect this, we will be allocating **an estimated 4.5 billion euro** in support for education and training in the 7-year programming period that will take us to 2020.

Work with the GPE will be a cornerstone of our future strategy, most notably in fragile countries. That's why we have decided to more than double our support for it in the coming years. We will be scaling up our funding for GPE to **375 million euro** over the next 7 years – that's equivalent to more than 500 million US dollars.

In 20 or so countries where the GPE operates we also focus on education in our bilateral relations and country programmes. The GPE seeks to catalyse additional support from donors. So in these partner countries we will be able to complement the GPE's efforts with over 1 billion euro from our bilateral programmes. We expect this approach to deliver a number of varied benefits – not least better funded basic education and more dynamic dialogue with partner governments. More than that, however, we expect to see more complementarity and coherence on the ground, inter alia through stronger local education groups, which form the coordination structure at the heart of the GPE.

In many of these countries – Laos, Myanmar, Mali and South Sudan, for instance – the European Union has already started a process of what we call **joint programming** with EU Member States. This is one of the EU's vehicles for turning aid effectiveness into an operational reality. Putting joint programming for education into action in countries where the GPE is present will naturally give extra weight to the GPE model, since local education groups are used as natural platforms coordination and dialogue in the education sector. We hope that this, in turn, will attract further donors and we encourage non-EU donors to join in the effort.



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]**

**Andris PIEBALGS**

European Commissioner for Development

## **Opening speech at the Brussels Global Partnership for Education Pledging Conference**

Global Partnership for Education      Second Replenishment Pledging conference  
**Brussels, 26 June 2014**

Your Royal Highness,  
Prime Minister Ponyo,  
Ms Gillard,  
Special Envoy Gordon Brown,  
Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very proud to be hosting this conference today, and I would take this opportunity to give my personal thanks to Julia Gillard, her team, and to my services at EuropeAid for the hard work that has gone into organising today's event.

**Nelson Mandela said that "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world".**

As a former teacher I can only echo this. Moreover, the GPE and the EU share the ambition of giving all children a decent education, providing equal opportunities for girls and boys and for disadvantaged children, and improving quality overall. In doing this we take a huge step forward in permanently alleviating poverty and injustice.

Whilst there has been good progress towards the education MDGs, 57 million children worldwide are still out of primary school – more than half are in sub-Saharan Africa. Millions in school are learning little. Millions more again cannot read or write. In some places girls are under attack simply for wanting to go to school.

Today our thoughts are with those 200 or more girls held captive in Nigeria. Denying children – girls in particular – their basic right to an education is unacceptable. The open letter I have signed with President Barroso, Julia Gillard and other eminent figures makes this crystal clear.

Since 2004, the European Commission has helped more than 13 million children enrol in primary schools and more than 1.2 million teachers improve their qualifications.

**I couldn't be more proud of what Europe is doing for children across the world, especially in these testing times. But we need to redouble our efforts. Donor support for education – and for the GPE Fund in particular – is as vital as ever.**

The road towards reaching the target of 3.5 billion dollars for the GPE Fund over 4 years starts here.

**So I'm very pleased to announce today that the European Union is pledging** to more than double its contribution to the GPE Fund to 375 million euro – **that's over half a billion US dollars** – over the next 7 years, up to 2020.

Alongside this we will be allocating over 1 billion euro from our bilateral programmes to education in partner countries where the GPE is also operating.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would particularly like to commend the many partner countries that will be pledging domestic financing for education today. They are taking on their responsibility for financing quality education for their children.

Education matters to people worldwide. When asked about their aspirations and priorities for the post-2015 development framework the world is seeking to shape, they put education top of the list.

They know that in providing every child with a decent education, we are paving the way for more equal, wealthier and safer world.

Thank you.