

## **Statement from the Government of Belgium**

**Delivered by Kris Panneels, Director of Multilateral and European Programmes  
Belgian Development Cooperation**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by presenting the regrets of Minister Chastel for not being able to be with us at this Pledging Event. He has requested that I make the Belgian intervention on his behalf.

Belgium has been an early supporter of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative. We were an early believer of the approach and still believe in the principles that lie at the basis of the initiative.

FTI in earlier times and the Global Partnership for Education as of now, have a meaning for us. It means

- = interventions that are aligned to Government strategies
- = all actors working together for a common goal, especially at local level
- = a well developed and credible sector approach
- = harmonization of donor-practices
- = complementarity between bilateral and multilateral resources

We are pleased with the way the Global Partnership for Education is now evolving. The initiative is moving towards an alliance of crucial stakeholders and supporters of the education sector and applying an approach of high political visibility that has proven its mobilizing power in the health sector. The partnership has now been gifted with a clear governance structure and

a more inclusive decision making process. The partnership is also working towards a more results oriented business model and a more transparent resource allocation mechanism.

We think that the value of the original philosophy of ownership, alignment and harmonization, are (and need to be) maintained in the new set-up. We also continue to view the MDG-ambition of providing access to basic education as the top priority and the fundamental driving force of the partnership.

In terms of funding, let me first report on our bilateral programmes. Within the context of the new division of labor, education was chosen as a priority sector in two of our most important partner countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. The indicative programs for both countries provide for a total sectoral support of 70 million euro for the period 2010-2013. In Burundi, Belgium will take up the role of lead donor. Education is also part of the new indicative program for the Palestine territories in the amount of 16 million euro. We will of course also continue to honor our existing commitments in other countries such as Vietnam, Uganda, Niger, Cambodia, and Rwanda, in the latter case through delegated cooperation with DFID.

Given our bilateral commitments in fragile countries, Belgium is interested in further discussing how the Global Partnership for Education will increase its involvement and support to those countries.

Concerning the multilateral channels, apart from the regular contributions to the different international financial institutions, funds, programs and agencies, we are pleased to report that we are able this year again to provide additional support to FTI Catalytic Fund. Our contribution to the Catalytic Fund has therefore increased from 1 million euro in 2008 and 2009 to 5 million in 2010 and 6 million euro in 2011.

The political context in Belgium is evolving these days, but I am sure you will understand that we are not yet in a position to formally make commitments for the new incoming government in budgetary terms or policy-wise. We are confident however that the traditional support that Belgium has been providing towards basic education will continue and hopefully expand in the coming years, as this priority is embedded in the legal texts underlying our development policy.

Thank you for your attention.